

POEMS BY  
THOMAS HOOD





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From the portrait by C. G. Lewis

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BY  
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY  
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## Introduction

Thomas Hood was born on the 23rd of May, 1799. He died, Saturday, 3rd May, 1845.

Hood was by ten years the junior of Lord Byron, who died in 1824; he was ten years the senior of Tennyson, born 1809, and thirteen years the senior of Browning. Theodore Hook, on whose decease, in 1841, Hood succeeded to the editorship of Colburn's *New Monthly*, was his senior by eleven years, having been born in 1788.

Thomas Hood made the acquaintance of Charles Lamb, then about forty years of age, who describes him to Coleridge as "a silentish young man you met at Islington one day, an invalid". And Lamb adds at the conclusion of this letter: "Hood has just come in: his sick eyes sparkled with health when he read your approbation". Hood, as Canon Ainger says, "revelled in opportunities of converse with men so



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various and interesting as Lamb and Clare, Allan Cunningham and Cary, John Hamilton Reynolds and De Quincey". Also "he had the great delight of meeting occasionally Wordsworth and Coleridge".

Late in his comparatively brief career he became, as he himself says, "very good friends" with Charles Dickens, and, in the memoir by Hood's son and daughter, Dickens and his family are mentioned among those who greatly cheered his declining years. Never a physically strong man, "from the date of his marriage, continually harassed by ill-health and pecuniary anxieties, he was forced to produce literary matter in season and out of season—with the grain and against it".

Hood was a fairly regular "outside contributor" to the pages of *Punch*, up to the volume dated 1843, where is to be found his famous "Song of the Shirt". The poem occupies the centre of a page, the borders of which are eccentrically illustrated by an artist who was then coming rapidly to the front, Richard, or rather "Dicky" Doyle. Strange to say, these drawings refer to topics of the day, and bear no sort of reference to the powerful poem of which they form the pictorial frame. These illustrations could have been



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of no possible assistance to the poem; as anyone taking up this number of *Punch*, attracted by Doyle's little cuts, would very naturally have expected to see the various subjects of these pictures alluded to in the verses occupying the centre of the page. His expectation would have been disappointed. These illustrated borders bear no reference whatever to the poem. Mark Lemon, in his editorial capacity, eliminated one stanza, so as to make the set of verses just exactly fit into the space at his disposal.

The Rev. Thomas Barham says of Hood: "In the art of punning, whatever be its merits or demerits, Theodore Hook had few rivals and but one superior, if indeed one,—we mean Mr. Thomas Hood". Had Hood to be judged only by his puns, the palm might have gone to Theodore Hook, who, as far as I am aware, never wrote seriously nor with pathos. Barham's memoir of Theodore Hook was written some time before Hood had given to the world his famous "Song of the Shirt".

Thackeray writes of Hood as if he, personally, had had a hand in his creation and had been appointed the arbiter of his destiny. He seems to go out of his way in order to show himself thoroughly annoyed with Hood for having refused to

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adopt the line in literature that he would have chosen for him. It seems strange that the kind-hearted satirist should have forgotten the obligation that was laid upon Hood's shoulders of keeping body and soul together for the sake of his wife and children, who were entirely dependent on his labour. The necessity of providing daily bread for his household was to him the mother of invention. As he himself, with that grim humour which was the very essence of his nature, expresses his own case: "It was only for his livelihood that he was ever a lively Hood". Such was the cynical vein in which he chose to review his own work. He appreciated what was best in him as a divine gift. "*Video meliora proboque*"; but there is no help for it, "*inferiora sequor*", because it is so easy and ready a caterer.

His rare pathos was, in a double sense, rare indeed. Thomas Hood's high-mettled Pegasus would have died of starvation had the winged horse been his only mount. Such an animal was a luxury that poor Hood could not have afforded to keep, had it not been for his pony of all work, his light-hearted gipsy pony, ever fresh, never "sick nor sorry", that would carry his master, at all paces from an amble to a

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gallop, returning, daily, from market laden with food for the family, and with provender for the support of the unexercised Pegasus. For Pegasus had to be reserved for rare flights.

Here it may be incidentally remarked that Thomas Hood was not what is commonly known as a "funny man". By which I mean that there was not in him the most remote affinity to the kind of social buffoon that, only once slightly sketched, never studiously depicted, by Dickens, was drawn to the life by that occasionally amusing imitator of his mannerisms, Albert Smith. There was nothing of the "funny man" about Hood; for the "funny man" is unoriginal, he possesses little real humour, if any; his fooling is but a kind of second-hand "stage-business" that soon becomes conventional, lugged in on all occasions, however inappropriate it may be; in short, he is simply the worst possible type of bore. Hood never could have been this, nor could he ever have been anything in the smallest degree resembling it. Thackeray was irate with him for his "comicalities", but he did not well to be angry. Canon Ainger describes Hood as "a lyric poet of real quality and earnest aims", a description utterly incompatible

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with his being a "funny man". None of Hood's contemporaries speak of him familiarly and lightly as "Tom Hood". Very rarely, if ever, did he so sign himself. A small point perhaps, but one to be insisted on as evidence of a fitting regard for his own reputation.

Thackeray was of opinion, angrily expressed, that Hood "evidently undervalued his own serious power, and thought that in punning and broad-grinning lay his chief strength". Thackeray was wrong; the punning and power of causing laughter came without effort to the man, who, through them, earned the necessities of life. Thackeray seems to ignore both the pecuniary loss that Hood had undergone, and the existence of Hood's wife and children, depending for their food on their father's ever-ready wit and humour. For as a writer of easy-going spontaneous verse, sparkling with wit and crackling with telling rhymes, Hood, as a genuine poet and naturally irrepressible punster, was incomparable. As a novelist and journalist he cannot be placed above the crowd. Verse was his existence; he was a poet, of various moods, variously expressed; some less noteworthy than others; all, in their kind, good, and not a few super excellent.



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After reading and returning again and again to "The Song of the Shirt", I feel positively disinclined to dwell upon any other serious poem of Hood's, be it even "The Bridge of Sighs". I may take up some verses here and there, as for example the poem of "Miss Kilmansegg", by way of relief; but it is that masterpiece, "The Song of the Shirt", which, written in the language of charity that makes the whole world kin, has gone straight to all our hearts. It was the poem that triumphed, not the writer of it, for he was anonymous; and it is well to remember that not one of the readers of that number of *Punch* in which it appeared, entertained the slightest suspicion as to its authorship. The editor knew who was the author, as did also the "council" round the *Punch* Table. The "council" would have rejected it as "unsuitable" (as had the editors of three other journals before it was sent to *Punch*), but, thanks to Mark Lemon's keen instinct as to what would "take" with the public, the veto of the *Punch* Staff was ignored. And Mark Lemon was right. Dickens guessed the secret of its authorship. At that time anonymity was golden. It was only when false claims as to the authorship of the Song were audaciously put forward, that



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the truth was publicly avowed. Did the public then realize that these were but the most precious notes of the dying poet? "Time", says Canon Ainger, "has confirmed the verdict then passed. In its kind the poem is a masterpiece: in the first place on account of its profound sympathy, which is above suspicion. There were a hundred minor poets in Hood's day who could have written creditable and pathetic verses on the same subject";—but they did not do it, nor did they even attempt it. The *divine afflatus* came to one and one only, and of all the others, if others there were, there was not one who, continues Canon Ainger, "could have produced the effect achieved by Hood".

It is somewhat difficult to give Hood his appropriate place in literature. As a writer of light verse overflowing with puns and quaint conceits he had not his equal. Of his serious poems I will speak later: as a prose writer, or as a novelist, his work calls for no remark. In this latter consideration I find myself in agreement with the opinion of Charles Dickens, who of Hood's *Up the Rhine* wrote, "rather poor, but I have not said so (in *The Examiner*), because Hood is too,—and ill besides". Here it will be noted that Dickens adopted

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just the very kind of humorous tone that would have come naturally to Hood, had the latter been expressing an adverse criticism of somebody else's work. But Hood's *Tylney Hall* Dickens described as "the most extraordinary jumble of impossible extravagance, and especial cleverness, I ever saw". Whether as a light novelist or as author of a comic serial, his work cannot be favourably compared with that of Theodore Hook. But as a story-teller in verse I should certainly reckon him superior to George Colman the younger (some thirty odd years his senior), whom, in his brief memoir of him, "G. B. B." describes as "scarcely inferior to La Fontaine". And the same writer goes on to say that Colman was certainly "the real father of all the Hoods and Ingoldsbys of a later generation": a curiously prejudiced opinion. Had Hood never written aught save merely clever comic verse, the comparison with Colman at all events might have been allowed. As to Thomas Barham, while we appreciate certain fine passages in his verse, yet, as a poet, he cannot be placed on a par with Hood.

Leigh Hunt, though he mentions his seniors Coleridge and Lamb,—both entertaining a high opinion of Hood—of whom

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he has much to say, and also his later literary contemporaries, including Thackeray and Douglas Jerrold, never once refers, either to Thomas Hood, or to his works. George Colman he mentions as a writer whose humour, compared with Goldsmith's, has "càricature and not depth". And, later, he says of the same writer, that when he was appointed licenser of plays *ex officio*, he "seemed inclined to license nothing but cant. When he (Colman) got into the sentimental he made a bad business of it, for he had no faith in sentiment. He mouthed and overdid it, as a man does when he is telling a lie. At a farce he was admirable; and he remained so to the last, whether writing or licensing." Rather a different opinion from the laudatory one I have already quoted from the memoir of "G. B. B."

As a poet subject to his own self-imposed limitations, Hood has rarely been surpassed, and still more rarely been equalled. Yet it is not easy to assign him his exact place among poets. He was a genius. "None but himself could be his parallel". With his gift of natural pathos, absolutely unforced, with his inexhaustible fund of genuine humour, and with his irrepressible matchless drollery, it is difficult to name

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anyone worthy to be placed on an equality with him. Possessed of strong dramatic power, which found expression and forcibly arrested attention in his verse, yet was Thomas Hood no dramatist. He was but a third-rate novelist, nor could he ever have claimed a place even in the second rank of journalists, light or serious. By the way, I may incidentally mention that the best prose specimen of Hood's satirical writing is, in my opinion, a description of an *Imaginary First Night of a New Play*. Procter [Barry Cornwall] recognized in Hood a brother poet. "I shall venture," says Barry Cornwall when writing to him, "in case you enrol your name among the living poets, to look forward with confidence to your complete success."

Thackeray, justly estimating Hood as "a man with a power to touch the heart almost unequalled", was angry with him because "he passes days and years in writing 'Young Ben he was a nice young man', and so forth". I could wish that Thackeray had cancelled that paper of his on "a Joke that he once heard from Tom Hood"; a joke which he would not repeat. Why have written about it at all? The great satirist might grieve that Hood had not chosen the better way, but no one



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could have more thoroughly understood the cruel necessity that compelled Hood to write jingles, and to make puns, than did Thackeray.

Hood's humour was never either coarse, nor irreverent. When the special call came to him, as from time to time it did, he answered to it with a burst of poetry that is inspired. Take for example the passage concerning the crucifix in the "Ode to Rae Wilson", the birthday stanzas to his little daughter, his "Farewell, Life", his dramatically tragic poem "Eugene Aram", and, not to name many more that will occur to every reader's memory, his incomparable "Bridge of Sighs", which alone would have gained for him a niche among world-famed poets, had it not been overshadowed by the inexpressibly touching inspiration that will hand his name and fame down to posterity, "The Song of the Shirt".

When he died there was engraved on his tombstone by his own desire, his special title to our undying love and affection, the simple words: "*He sang the Song of the Shirt*".

F. C. BURNAND.



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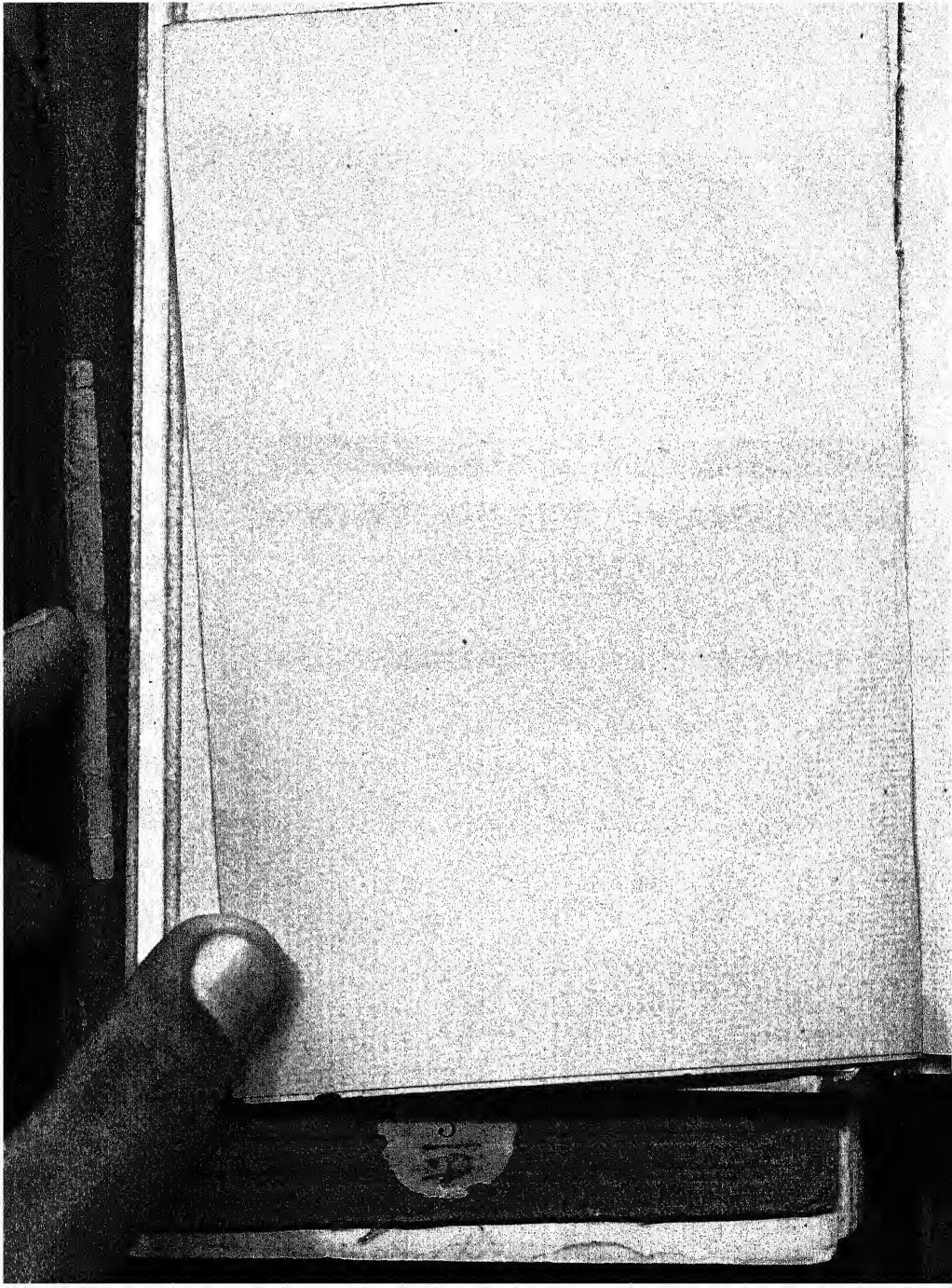
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## To Hope

O! take, young Seraph, take thy harp,  
And play to me so cheerily;  
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,  
And life wears on so wearily.

O! take thy harp!

O! sing as thou wert wont to do,  
When, all youth's sunny season long,  
I sat and listen'd to thy song,  
And yet 't was ever, ever new.—  
With magic in each heav'n-tun'd string,  
The future bliss thy constant theme,  
O then each little woe took wing  
Away, like phantoms of a dream;  
As if each sound,  
That flutter'd round,  
Had floated over Lethe's stream!

By all those bright and happy hours  
We spent in life's sweet eastern bow'rs,  
Where thou wouldst sit and smile, and  
show,  
Ere buds were come—where flow'rs would  
blow,



## TO HOPE

And oft anticipate the rise  
Of life's warm sun that scal'd the skies,  
By many a story of love and glory,  
And friendships promis'd oft to me,  
By all the faith I lent to thee,  
O! take, young Seraph, take thy harp,  
And play to me so cheerily;  
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,  
And life wears on so wearily.

O! take thy harp!

Perchance the strings will sound less clear,  
That long have lain neglected by  
In sorrow's misty atmosphere—  
It ne'er may speak as it hath spoken,  
Such joyous notes so brisk and high;  
But are its golden cords all broken?  
Are there not some, though weak and low,  
To play a lullaby to woe?  
But thou canst sing of love no more,  
For Celia show'd that dream was vain—  
And many a fancied bliss is o'er,  
That comes not e'en in dreams again.

Alas! alas!

How pleasures pass,  
And leave thee now no subject, save  
The peace and bliss beyond the grave!—

Then be thy flight among the skies;  
Take, then, O! take the skylark's wing,

*TO HOPE*

And leave dull earth, and heav'nward rise  
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing

On skylark's wing!

Another life-spring there adorns  
Another youth,—without the dread  
Of cruel care, whose crown of thorns  
Is here for manhood's aching head.—  
Oh, there are realms of welcome day,  
A world where tears are wiped away!  
Then be thy flight among the skies;  
Take then, oh! take the skylark's wing,  
And leave dull earth, and heav'nward rise  
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing

On skylark's wing!

## The Departure of Summer

Summer is gone on swallow's wings,  
And Earth has buried all her flowers:  
No more the lark, the linnet, sings,  
But Silence sits in faded bowers.  
There is a shadow on the plain  
Of Winter ere he comes again,—  
There is in woods a solemn sound  
Of hollow warnings whispered round,  
As Echo in her deep recess  
For once had turned a prophetess.  
Shuddering Autumn stops to list,  
And breathes his fears in sudden sighs,  
With clouded face and hazel eyes  
That quench themselves, and hide in mist.

Yes, Summer's gone like pageant bright;  
Its glorious days of golden light  
Are gone—the mimic suns that quiver,  
Then melt in Time's dark-flowing river.  
Gone the sweetly scented breeze  
That spoke in music to the trees;  
Gone for damp and chilly breath,  
As if fresh blown o'er marble seas,

## *THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER*

Or newly from the lungs of Death.  
Gone its virgin roses' blushes,  
Warm as when Aurora rushes  
Freshly from the god's embrace,  
With all her shame upon her face.  
Old time hath laid them in the mould;  
Sure he is blind as well as old;  
Whose hand relentless never spares  
Young cheeks so beauty-bright as theirs!  
Gone are the flame-eyed lovers now  
From where so blushing-blest they tarried  
Under the hawthorn's blossom bough,  
Gone; for Day and Night are married.  
All the light of love is fled;  
Alas! that negro breasts should hide  
The lips that were so rosy red,  
At morning and at even-tide!

Delightful Summer! then adieu  
Till thou shalt visit us anew:  
But who without regretful sigh  
Can say, adieu, and see thee fly?  
Not he that e'er hath felt thy power,  
His joy expanding like a flower  
That cometh after rain and snow,  
Looks up at Heaven, and learns to glow.  
Not he that fled from Babel-strife  
To the green Sabbath-land of life,  
To dodge dull Care 'mid clustered trees,  
And cool his forehead in the breeze,—



## *THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER*

Whose spirit, weary-worn perchance,  
Shook from its wings a weight of grief,  
And perched upon an aspen leaf,  
For every breath to make it dance.

Farewell!—on wings of sombre stain,  
That blacken in the last blue skies,  
Thou fly'st; but thou wilt come again  
On the gay wings of butterflies.  
Spring at thy approach will sprout  
Her new Corinthian beauties out,  
Leaf-woven homes, where twitter words  
Will grow to songs, and eggs to birds;  
Ambitious buds shall swell to flowers,  
And April smiles to sunny hours.  
Bright days shall be, and gentle nights  
Full of soft breath and echo lights,  
As if the god of sun-time kept  
His eyes half open while he slept.  
Roses shall be where roses were,  
Not shadows, but reality;  
As if they never perished there,  
But slept in immortality:  
Nature shall thrill with new delight,  
And Time's relumined river run  
Warm as young blood, and dazzling bright,  
As if its source were the sun!

But say, hath Winter then no charms?  
Is there no joy, no gladness warms

## *THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER*

His aged heart? no happy wiles  
To cheat the hoary one to smiles?  
Onward he comes—the cruel North  
Pours his furious whirlwind forth  
Before him—and we breathe the breath  
Of famished bears that howl to death.  
Onward he comes from rocks that blanch  
O'er solid streams that never flow,  
His tears all ice, his locks all snow,  
Just crept from some huge avalanche—  
A thing half-breathing and half-warm,  
As if one spark began to glow  
Within some statue's marble form,  
Or pilgrim stiffened in the storm.  
O! will not Mirth's light arrows fail  
To pierce that frozen coat of mail?  
O! will not Joy but strive in vain  
To light up those glazed eyes again?

No! take him in, and blaze the oak,  
And pour the wine, and warm the ale;  
His sides shall shake to many a joke,  
His tongue shall thaw in many a tale,  
His eyes grow bright, his heart be gay,  
And even his palsy charmed away.  
What heeds he then the boisterous shout  
Of angry winds that scold without,  
Like shrewish wives at tavern door?  
What heeds he then the wild uproar  
Of billows bursting on the shore?

## THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER

In dashing waves, in howling breeze,  
There is a music that can charm him;  
When safe and sheltered, and at ease,  
He hears the storm that cannot harm him.  
But hark! those shouts! that sudden din  
Of little hearts that laugh within.  
O! take him where the youngsters play,  
And he will grow as young as they!  
They come! they come! each blue-eyed

Sport,

The Twelfth-Night King and all his court—  
'Tis Mirth fresh crowned with mistletoe!  
Music with merry fiddles,  
Joy "on light fantastic toe",  
Wit with all its jests and riddles,  
Singing and dancing as they go.  
And Love, young Love, among the rest,  
A welcome—nor unbidden guest.

But still for Summer dost thou grieve?  
Then read our poets—they shall weave  
A garden of green fancies still,  
Where thy wish may rove at will.  
They have kept for after treats  
The essences of summer sweets,  
And echoes of its songs that wind  
In endless music through the mind:  
They have stamped in visible traces  
The "thoughts that breathe", in words  
that shine—

## THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER

The flights of soul in sunny places—  
To greet and company with thine.  
These shall wing thee on to flowers—  
The past or future, that shall seem  
All the brighter in thy dream  
For blowing in such desert hours.  
The Summer never shines so bright  
As thought of in a winter's night;  
And the sweetest, loveliest rose  
Is in the bud before it blows;  
The dear one of the lover's heart  
Is painted to his longing eyes,  
In charms she ne'er can realize—  
But when she turns again to part.  
Dream thou then, and bind thy brow  
With wreath of fancy roses now,  
And drink of Summer in the cup  
Where the Muse hath mixed it up;  
The "dance and song, and sunburnt  
mirth",  
With the warm nectar of the earth:  
Drink! 'twill glow in every vein,  
And thou shalt dream the winter through:  
Then waken to the sun again,  
And find thy Summer Vision true!



Like water-lilies on that motionless deep,

## THE SEA OF DEATH

How beautiful! with bright unruffled hair  
On sleek unfretted brows, and eyes that  
were

Buried in marble tombs, a pale eclipse!  
And smile-bedimpled cheeks, and pleasant  
lips,

Meekly apart, as if the soul intense  
Spake out in dreams of its own innocence:  
And so they lay in loveliness, and kept  
The birth-night of their peace, that Life  
e'en wept

With very envy of their happy fronts;  
For there were neighbour brows scarr'd  
by the brunts

Of strife and sorrowing—where Care had set  
His crooked autograph, and marr'd the jet  
Of glossy locks, with hollow eyes forlorn,  
And lips that curl'd in bitterness and scorn—  
Wretched,—as they had breathed of this  
world's pain,

And so bequeath'd it to the world again  
Through the beholder's heart in heavy  
sighs.

So lay they garmented in torpid light,  
Under the pall of a transparent night,  
Like solemn apparitions lull'd sublime  
To everlasting rest,—and with them Time  
Slept, as he sleeps upon the silent face  
Of a dark dial in a sunless place.

## To an Absentee

O'er hill, and dale, and distant sea,  
Through all the miles that stretch between,  
My thought must fly to rest on thee,  
And would, though worlds should intervene.

Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks  
The farther we are forced apart,  
Affection's firm elastic links  
But bind the closer round the heart.

For now we sever each from each,  
I learn what I have lost in thee;  
Alas! that nothing less could teach,  
How great indeed my love should be!

Farewell! I did not know thy worth,  
But thou art gone, and now 'tis prized:  
So angels walk'd unknown on earth,  
But when they flew were recognized!

## The Two Peacocks of Bedfont

Alas! that breathing Vanity should go  
Where Pride is buried,—like its very  
ghost,  
Uprisen from the naked bones below,  
In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast  
Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,  
Shedding its chilling superstition most  
On young and ignorant natures—as it wont  
To haunt the peaceful churchyard of Bed-  
font!

Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of  
prayer,  
Behold two maidens, up the quiet green  
Shining, far distant in the summer air  
That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes  
between  
Their downy plumes,—sailing as if they  
were  
Two far-off ships,—until they brush be-  
tween



## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT*

The churchyard's humble walls, and watch  
and wait  
On either side of the wide open'd gate.

And there they stand—with haughty necks  
before

God's holy house, that points towards  
the skies—

Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,  
And tempting homage from unthought-  
ful eyes:

And Youth looks lingering from the temple  
door,

Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,  
With pouting lips,—forgetful of the grace,  
Of health, and smiles, on the heart-con-  
scious face;—

Because that Wealth, which has no bliss  
beside,

May wear the happiness of rich attire;  
And those two sisters, in their silly pride,  
May change the soul's warm glances for  
the fire

Of lifeless diamonds;—and for health  
deny'd,—

With art, that blushes at itself, inspire  
Their languid cheeks—and flourish in a  
glory

That has no life in life, nor after-story.

## TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT

The aged priest goes shaking his grey hair  
In meekest censuring, and turns his eye  
Earthward in grief, and heavenward in  
pray'r,

And sighs, and clasps his hands, and  
passes by.

Good-hearted man! what sullen soul would  
wear

Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly  
Put on thy censure, that might win the  
praise

Of one so grey in goodness and in days?

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame

Of this ungodly shine of human pride,  
And sadly blends his reverence and blame  
In one grave bow, and passes with a  
stride

Impatient:—many a red-hooded dame

Turns her pain'd head, but not her  
glance, aside

From wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,  
That heaven hath no wet judgments for  
the vain.

"I have a lily in the bloom at home,"

Quoth one, "and by the blessed Sabbath  
day

I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come

And read a lesson upon vain array;—

## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFORD*

And when stiff silks are rustling up, and  
some

Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes  
and say—

Making my reverence,—‘Ladies, an’ you  
please,

King Solomon’s not half so fine as these’.”

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run  
His earthly course,—“Nay, Goody, let  
your text

Grow in the garden,—We have only one—  
Who knows that these dim eyes may see  
the next?

Summer will come again, and summer sun,  
And lilies too,—but I were sorely vext  
To mar my garden, and cut short the blow  
Of the last lily I may live to grow.”

“The last!” quoth she, “and though the  
last it were—

Lo! those two wantons, where they  
stand so proud

With waving plumes, and jewels in their  
hair,

And painted cheeks, like Dragons to be  
bow’d

And curtsey’d to!—last Sabbath after  
pray’r,

I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud

*TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT*

If they were angels—but I made him know  
God's bright ones better, with a bitter  
blow!"

So speaking, they pursue the pebbly walk  
That leads to the white porch the Sunday  
throng,

Hand-coupled urchins in restrain'd talk,  
And anxious pedagogue that chastens  
wrong,

And posied churchwarden with solemn  
stalk,

And gold-bedizen'd beadle flames along,  
And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,  
Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene;

And blushing maiden—modestly array'd  
In spotless white,—still conscious of the  
glass;

And she, the lonely widow, that hath made  
A sable covenant with grief,—alas!

She veils her tears under the deep, deep  
shade,

While the poor kindly-hearted, as they  
pass,

Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress  
Her boy,—so rosy!—and so fatherless!

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all  
draw near

The fair white temple to the timely call



## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT*

Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.—  
Now the last frock, and scarlet hood,  
and shawl

Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere  
Of the low porch, and heav'n has won  
them all,

—Saving those two, that turn aside and pass  
In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

Ah me! to see their silken manors trail'd  
In purple luxuries—with restless gold,—  
Flaunting the grass where widowhood has  
wail'd

In blotted black,—over the heapy mould  
Panting wave-wantonly! They never quail'd  
How the warm vanity abused the cold;  
Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone  
Sadly uplooking through transparent stone:

But swept their dwellings with unquiet  
light,

Shocking the awful presence of the dead;  
Where gracious natures would their eyes  
benight,

Nor wear their being with a lip too red,  
Nor move too rudely in the summer bright  
Of sun, but put staid sorrow in their  
tread,

Meting it into steps, with inward breath,  
In very pity to bereaved death.

## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFORD*

Now in the church, time-sober'd minds  
resign

To solemn pray'r, and the loud chaunted  
hymn,—

With glowing picturings of joys divine  
Painting the mistlight where the roof is  
dim;

But youth looks upward to the window  
shine,

Warming with rose and purple and the  
swim

Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains  
Of gorgeous light through many-colour'd  
panes;

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath  
Enrobed his angels,—and with absent  
eyes

Hearing of Heav'n, and its directed path,  
Thoughtful of slippers,—and the glorious  
skies

Clouding with satin,—till the preacher's  
wrath

Consumes his pity, and he glows and  
cries,

With a deep voice that trembles in its might,  
And earnest eyes grown eloquent in light:

“O that the vacant eye would learn to look  
On very beauty, and the heart embrace

## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT*

True loveliness, and from this holy book  
Drink the warm-breathing tenderness  
and grace  
Of love indeed! O that the young soul  
took

Its virgin passion from the glorious face  
Of fair religion, and address'd its strife,  
To win the riches of eternal life!

"Doth the vain heart love glory that is  
none,

And the poor excellence of vain attire?  
O go, and drown your eyes against the sun,

The visible ruler of the starry quire,  
Till boiling gold in giddy eddies run,

Dazzling the brain with orbs of living  
fire;

And the faint soul down darkens into night,  
And dies a burning martyrdom to light.

"O go, and gaze,—when the low winds  
of ev'n

Breathe hymns, and Nature's many  
forests nod

Their gold-crown'd heads; and the rich  
blooms of heav'n

Sun-ripen'd give their blushes up to God;  
And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are  
riv'n

By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod

## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFORD*

Of heavenly Moses,—that your thirsty sense  
May quench its longings of magnificence!

“Yet suns shall perish—stars shall fade  
away—

Day into darkness—darkness into death—  
Death into silence; the warm light of day,  
The blooms of summer, the rich glowing  
breath

Of even—all shall wither and decay,  
Like the frail furniture of dreams be-  
neath

The touch of morn—or bubbles of rich dyes  
That break and vanish in the aching eyes.”

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant  
shed

Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome  
tears, and pour

Their sin to earth,—and with low-drooping  
head

Receive the falling blessing, and implore  
Its grace—then soberly with chasten'd  
tread,

They meekly press towards the gusty  
door,

With humbled eyes that go to graze upon  
The lowly grass—like him of Babylon.

The lowly grass:—O water-constant mind!  
Fast-ebbing holiness!—soon-fading grace



## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFORD*

Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind  
Through the low porch had wash'd it  
from the face  
For ever!—how they lift their eyes to find  
Old vanities.—Pride wins the very place  
Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now  
With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow!

And lo! with eager looks they seek the way  
Of old temptation at the lowly gate;  
To feast on feathers, and on vain array,  
And painted cheeks, and the rich glis-  
tering state  
Of jewel-sprinkled locks.—But where are  
they,  
The graceless haughty ones that used to  
wait  
With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffen'd  
eye?—  
None challenge the old homage bending by.

In vain they look for the ungracious bloom  
Of rich apparel where it glowed before,—  
For Vanity has faded all to gloom,  
And lofty Pride has stiffen'd to the core,  
For impious Life to tremble at its doom,—  
Set for a warning token evermore,  
Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise  
Shall gaze with lifted hands and wond'ring  
eyes.

## *TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT*

The aged priest goes on each Sabbath  
morn,

But shakes not sorrow under his grey  
hair;

The solemn clerk goes lavender'd and  
shorn,

Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair;—  
And ancient lips that pucker'd up in scorn,

Go smoothly breathing to the house of  
pray'r;

And in the garden-plot from day to day,  
The lily blooms its long white life away.

And where two haughty maidens used to be,  
In pride of plume, where plummy Death  
had trod,

Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,  
Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod;—

There, gentle stranger, thou mayst only see  
Two sombre Peacocks.—Age, with  
sapient nod

Marking the spot, still tarries to declare  
How they once lived, and wherefore they  
are there.

## To a False Friend

Our hands have met, but not our hearts;  
Our hands will never meet again.  
Friends, if we have ever been,  
Friends we cannot now remain:  
I only know I loved you once,  
I only know I loved in vain;  
Our hands have met, but not our hearts;  
Our hands will never meet again!

Then farewell to heart and hand!  
I would our hands had never met:  
Even the outward form of love  
Must be resigned with some regret.  
Friends we still might seem to be,  
If I my wrong could e'er forget.  
Our hands have joined, but not our hearts:  
I would our hands had never met!

Ode: Autumn

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn  
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening  
To silence,—for no lonely bird would sing  
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,  
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn—  
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright  
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,  
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

Where are the songs of Summer?—With  
the sun,  
Oping the dusky eyelids of the south,  
Till shade and silence waken up as one,  
And Morning sings with a warm odorous  
mouth,  
Where are the merry birds?—Away, away,  
On panting wings through the inclement  
skies,  
Lest owls should prey  
Undazzled at noon-day,  
And tear with horny beak their lustrous  
eyes.



## AUTUMN

Where are the blooms of Summer?—In  
the west,

Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,  
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is  
prest

Like tearful Proserpine, snatch'd from her  
flow'rs

To a most gloomy breast.

Where is the pride of Summer,—the green  
pine,—

The many, many leaves all twinkling?—  
Three

On the moss'd elm; three on the naked  
lime

Trembling,—and one upon the old oak  
tree!

Where is the Dryads' immortality?—

Gone into mournful cypress and dark  
yew,

Or wearing the long gloomy Winter  
through

In the smooth holly's green eternity.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplish'd  
hoard,

The ants have brimm'd their garners with  
ripe grain,

And honey bees have stored

The sweets of Summer in their luscious  
cells:

## AUTUMN

The swallows all have wing'd across the  
main;

But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,  
And sighs her tearful spells

Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.

Alone, alone,

Upon a mossy stone,

She sits and reckons up the dead and gone

With the last leaves for a love-rosary,

Whilst all the wither'd world looks drearily,

Like a dim picture of the drowned past

In the hush'd mind's mysterious far away,

Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the  
last

Into that distance, grey upon the grey.

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded

Under the languid downfall of her hair:

She wears a coronal of flowers faded

Upon her forehead, and a face of care;—

There is enough of wither'd everywhere

To make her bower,—and enough of  
gloom;

There is enough of sadness to invite,

If only for the rose that died,—whose  
doom

Is Beauty's,—she that with the living  
bloom

Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the  
light:

## *AUTUMN*

There is enough of sorrowing, and quite  
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth  
bear,—

Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl;  
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,  
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

## The Forsaken

The dead are in their silent graves,  
And the dew is cold above,  
And the living weep and sigh,  
Over dust that once was love.

Once I only wept the dead,  
But now the living cause my pain:  
How couldst thou steal me from my tears  
To leave me to my tears again?

My Mother rests beneath the sod,—  
Her rest is calm and very deep:  
I wish'd that she could see our loves,—  
But now I gladden in her sleep.

Last night unbound my raven locks,  
The morning saw them turn'd to grey,  
Once they were black and well-beloved,  
But thou art changed,—and so are they!

The useless lock I gave thee once,  
To gaze upon and think of me,  
Was ta'en with smiles,—but this was torn  
In sorrow that I send to thee!



## I Love Thee

I love thee—I love thee!  
'Tis all that I can say;—  
It is my vision in the night,  
My dreaming in the day;  
The very echo of my heart,  
The blessing when I pray:  
I love thee—I love thee!  
Is all that I can say.

I love thee—I love thee!  
Is ever on my tongue;  
In all my proudest poesy  
That chorus still is sung;  
It is the verdict of my eyes,  
Amidst the gay and young:  
I love thee—I love thee!  
A thousand maids among.

I love thee—I love thee!  
Thy bright and hazel glance,  
The mellow lute upon those lips,  
Whose tender tones entrance;  
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs  
That still these words enhance,  
I love thee—I love thee!  
Whatever be thy chance.

## False Poets and True

TO WORDSWORTH

Look how the lark soars upward and is  
gone,

Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!  
His voice is heard, but body there is none  
To fix the vague excursions of the eye.  
So, poets' songs are with us, tho' they die  
Obscured, and hid by death's oblivious  
shroud,

And Earth inherits the rich melody  
Like raining music from the morning cloud.  
Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and  
loud

Their voices reach us through the lapse  
of space:

The noisy day is deafen'd by a crowd  
Of undistinguish'd birds, a twittering race;  
But only lark and nightingale forlorn  
Fill up the silences of night and morn.

Ode on a Distant  
Prospect of  
Clapham Academy<sup>1</sup>

Ah me! those old familiar bounds!  
That classic house, those classic grounds,  
My pensive thought recalls!  
What tender urchins now confine,  
What little captives now repine,  
Within yon irksome walls?

Ay, that's the very house! I know  
Its ugly windows, ten a-row!  
Its chimneys in the rear!  
And there's the iron rod so high,  
That drew the thunder from the sky,  
And turn'd our table-beer!

There I was birch'd! there I was bred!  
There like a little Adam fed  
From Learning's woeful tree!  
The weary tasks I used to con!—  
The hopeless leaves I wept upon!—  
Most fruitless leaves to me!—

<sup>1</sup> No connection with any other ode.

ODE ON CLAPHAM ACADEMY

The summon'd class!—the awful bow!—

I wonder who is master now

And wholesome anguish sheds!

How many ushers now employs,

How many maids to see the boys

Have nothing in their heads!

And Mrs. S——?—Doth she abet

(Like Pallas in the parlour) yet

Some favoured two or three,—

The little Crichtons of the hour,

Her muffin-medals that devour,

And swill her prize—bohea?

Ay, there's the playground! there's the  
lime,

Beneath whose shade in summer's prime

So wildly I have read!—

Who sits there *now*, and skims the cream

Of young Romance, and weaves a dream

Of love and Cottage bread?

Who struts the Randall of the walk?

Who models tiny heads in chalk?

Who scoops the light canoe?

What early genius buds apace?

Where's Poynter? Harris? Bowers? Chase?

Hal Baylis? blithe Carew?



## ON A DISTANT PROSPECT

Alack! they're gone—a thousand ways!  
And some are serving in "the Greys",  
And some have perished young!—  
Jack Harris weds his second wife;  
Hal Baylis drives the *wane* of life;  
And blithe Carew—is hung!

Grave Bowers teaches A B C  
To savages at Owhyee;  
Poor Chase is with the worms!—  
All, all are gone—the olden breed!—  
New crops of mushroom boys succeed,  
"And push us from our *forms!*"

Lo! where they scramble forth, and shout,  
And leap, and skip, and mob about,  
At play where we have play'd!  
Some hop, some run (some fall), some twine  
Their crony arms; some in the shine,—  
And some are in the shade!

Lo! there what mix'd conditions run!  
The orphan lad; the widow's son;  
And Fortune's favour'd care—  
The wealthy-born, for whom she hath  
Mac-Adamized the future path—  
The Nabob's pampered heir!

## OF CLAPHAM ACADEMY

Some brightly starr'd—some evil born,—  
For honour some, and some for scorn,—  
For fair or foul renown!  
Good, bad, indiff'rent—none may lack!  
Look, here's a White, and there's a Black!  
And there's a Creole brown!

Some laugh and sing, some mope and weep,  
And wish *their* "frugal sires would keep  
Their only sons at home;"—  
Some tease the future tense, and plan  
The full-grown doings of the man,  
And pant for years to come!

A foolish wish! There's one at hoop;  
And four at *fives*! and five who stoop  
The marble taw to speed!  
And one that curvets in and out,  
Reining his fellow Cob about,—  
Would I were in his *steed*!

Yet he would gladly halt and drop  
That boyish harness off, to swop  
With this world's heavy van—  
To toil, to tug. O little fool!  
While thou canst be a horse at school  
To wish to be a man!

ON A DISTANT PROSPECT

Perchance thou deem'st it were a thing  
To wear a crown,—to be a king!

And sleep on regal down!  
Alas! thou know'st not kingly cares;  
Far happier is thy head that wears  
That hat without a crown!

And dost thou think that years acquire  
New added joys? Dost think thy sire  
More happy than his son?  
That manhood's mirth?—Oh, go thy ways  
To Drury Lane when — *plays*,  
And see how *forced* our fun!

Thy taws are brave!—thy tops are rare!—  
*Our* tops are spun with coil of care,  
*Our dumps* are no delight!—  
The Elgin marbles are but tame,  
And 'tis at best a sorry game  
To fly the Muse's kite!

Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,  
Our topmost joys fall dull and dead  
Like balls with no rebound!  
And often with a faded eye  
We look behind, and send a sigh  
Towards that merry ground!

OF CLAPHAM ACADEMY

Then be contented. Thou hast got  
The most of heaven in thy young lot;  
There's sky-blue in thy cup!  
Thou'lt find thy Manhood all too fast—  
Soon come, soon gone! and Age at last  
A sorry *breaking-up!*



I Remember,  
I Remember

I remember, I remember,  
The house where I was born,  
The little window where the sun  
Came peeping in at morn;  
He never came a wink too soon,  
Nor brought too long a day,  
But now, I often wish the night  
Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember,  
The roses, red and white,  
The violets, and the lily-cups,  
Those flowers made of light!  
The lilacs where the robin built,  
And where my brother set  
The laburnum on his birthday,—  
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember,  
Where I was used to swing,  
And thought the air must rush as fresh  
To swallows on the wing;

*I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER*

My spirit flew in feathers then,  
That is so heavy now,  
And summer pools could hardly cool  
The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember,  
The fir-trees dark and high;  
I used to think their slender tops  
Were close against the sky:  
It was a childish ignorance,  
But now 't is little joy  
To know I'm farther off from Heav'n  
Than when I was a boy.

## A Retrospective Review

O, when I was a tiny boy,  
My days and nights were full of joy,  
My mates were blithe and kind!—  
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,  
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,  
To cast a look behind!

A hoop was an eternal round  
Of pleasure. In those days I found  
A top a joyous thing;—  
But now those past delights I drop,  
My head, alas! is all my top,  
And careful thoughts the string!

My marbles—once my bag was stor'd,—  
Now I must play with Elgin's lord,  
With Theseus for a taw!  
My playful horse has slipt his string,  
Forgotten all his capering,  
And harness'd to the law!

## *A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW*

My kite—how fast and far it flew!  
Whilst I, a sort of Franklin, drew  
My pleasure from the sky!  
'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,  
The tasks I wrote—my present dreams  
Will never soar so high!

My joys are wingless all and dead;  
My dumps are made of more than lead;  
My flights soon find a fall;  
My fears prevail, my fancies droop,  
Joy never cometh with a hoop,  
And seldom with a call!

My football's laid upon the shelf;  
I am a shuttlecock myself  
The world knocks to and fro;—  
My archery is all unlearn'd,  
And grief against myself has turned  
My arrows and my bow!

No more in noontide sun I bask;  
My authorship's an endless task,  
My head's ne'er out of school:  
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight,  
I have too many foes to fight,  
And friends grown strangely cool!



## *A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW*

The very chum that shared my cake  
Holds out so cold a hand to shake,  
It makes me shrink and sigh:—  
On this I will not dwell and hang,  
The changeling would not feel a pang  
Though these should meet his eye!

No skies so blue or so serene  
As then;—no leaves look half so green  
As cloth'd the playground tree!  
All things I lov'd are alter'd so,  
Nor does it ease my heart to know  
That change resides in me!

O, for the garb that mark'd the boy,  
The trousers made of corduroy,  
Well ink'd with black and red;  
The crownless hat, ne'er deem'd an ill—  
It only let the sunshine still  
Repose upon my head!

O, for the riband round the neck!  
The careless dog's-ears apt to deck  
My book and collar both!  
How can this formal man be styled  
Merely an Alexandrine child,  
A boy of larger growth?

## A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

O, for that small, small beer anew!  
And (heaven's own type) that mild sky-  
blue

That wash'd my sweet meals down;  
The master even!—and that small Turk  
That fagg'd me!—worse is now my work—  
A fag for all the town!

O, for the lessons learn'd by heart!  
Ay, though the very birch's smart  
Should mark those hours again;  
I'd "kiss the rod", and be resign'd  
Beneath the stroke, and even find  
Some sugar in the cane!

The Arabian Nights rehears'd in bed!  
The Fairy Tales in school-time read,  
By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun!  
The angel form that always walk'd  
In all my dreams, and look'd and talk'd  
Exactly like Miss Brown!

The *omne bene*—Christmas come!  
The prize of merit, won for home—  
Merit had prizes then!  
But now I write for days and days,  
For fame—a deal of empty praise,  
Without the silver pen!

## *A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW*

Then "home, sweet home!" the crowded  
coach—

The joyous shout—the loud approach—

The winding horns like rams'!

The meeting sweet that made me thrill,

The sweetmeats almost sweeter still,

No "satis" to the "jams"!—

When that I was a tiny boy

My days and nights were full of joy,

My mates were blithe and kind.

No wonder that I sometimes sigh,

And dash the tear-drop from my eye,

To cast a look behind!

## Ballad

It was not in the winter  
Our loving lot was cast;  
It was the time of roses,—  
We plucked them as we passed.

That churlish season never frowned  
On early lovers yet:—  
Oh, no—the world was newly crowned  
With flowers, when first we met.

'T was twilight, and I bade you go,  
But still you held me fast;  
It was the time of roses,—  
We plucked them as we passed!

What else could peer my glowing cheek,  
That tears began to stud?  
And when I asked the like of Love,  
You snatched a damask bud;

And oped it to the dainty core,  
Still glowing to the last.—  
It was the time of roses—  
We plucked them as we passed!



## Flowers

I will not have the mad Clytie,  
Whose head is turned by the sun;  
The tulip is a courtly quean,  
Whom therefore I will shun;  
The cowslip is a country wench;  
The violet is a nun;—  
But I will woo the dainty rose,  
The queen of every one.

The pea is but a wanton witch,  
In too much haste to wed,  
And clasps her rings on every hand;  
The wolfsbane I should dread;  
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,  
That always mourns the dead;—  
But I will woo the dainty rose,  
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white, like a saint,  
And so is no mate for me—  
And the daisy's cheek is tipped with a  
blush,  
She is of such low degree;

## *FLOWERS*

Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,  
And the broom's betrothed to the bee;—  
But I will plight with the dainty rose,  
For fairest of all is she.

## Ruth

She stood breast high amid the corn,  
Clasped by the golden light of morn,  
Like the sweetheart of the sun,  
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,  
Deeply ripened;—such a blush  
In the midst of brown was born,  
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,  
Which were blackest none could tell,  
But long lashes veiled a light,  
That had else been all too bright,

And her hat, with shady brim,  
Made her tressy forehead dim;—  
Thus she stood amid the stooks,  
Praising God with sweetest looks:—

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean,  
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean;  
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,  
Share my harvest and my home.

## The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies

'T was in that mellow season of the year,  
When the hot Sun singes the yellow leaves  
Till they be gold,—and with a broader  
sphere

The Moon looks down on Ceres and her  
sheaves;

When more abundantly the spider weaves,  
And the cold wind breathes from a chillier  
clime;

That forth I fared, on one of those still  
eves,

Touch'd with the dewy sadness of the  
time,

To think how the bright months had spent  
their prime.

So that, wherever I address'd my way,  
I seem'd to track the melancholy feet  
Of him that is the Father of Decay,  
And spoils at once the sour weed and the  
sweet;—



## THE PLEA OF THE

Wherefore regretfully I made retreat  
To some unwasted regions of my brain,  
Charin'd with the light of summer and  
the heat,  
And bade that bounteous season bloom  
again,  
And sprout fresh flowers in mine own  
domain.

It was a shady and sequester'd scene,  
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,  
Planted with his own laurels ever green,  
And roses that for endless summer blow;  
And there were fountain springs to over-  
flow  
Their marble basins,—and cool green  
arcades  
Of tall o'erarching sycamores, to throw  
Athwart the dappled path their dancing  
shades,—  
With timid coneys cropping the green  
blades.

And there were crystal pools, peopled with  
fish,  
Argent and gold; and some of Tyrian skin,  
Some crimson-barr'd;—and ever at a wish  
They rose obsequious till the wave grew  
thin

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

As glass upon their backs, and then dived  
in,  
Quenching their ardent scales in watery  
gloom;  
Whilst others with fresh hues row'd forth  
to win  
My changeable regard,—for so we doom  
Things born of thought to vanish or to  
bloom.

And there were many birds of many dyes,  
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,  
And stately peacocks with their splendid  
eyes,  
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden  
glow,  
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,  
Besides some vocalists without a name,  
That oft on fairy errands come and go,  
With accents magical;—and all were tame,  
And pecked at my hand where'er I came.

And for my sylvan company, in lieu  
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,  
Sat Queen Titania with her pretty crew,  
All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears,  
For she was gracious to my childish years,  
And made me free of her enchanted round;  
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still en-  
dears,

## THE PLEA OF THE

And plants her court upon a verdant  
mound,  
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves  
profound.

“Ah me,” she cries, “was ever moonlight  
seen

So clear and tender for our midnight trips?  
Go some one forth, and with a trump con-  
vene

My lieges all!”—Away the goblin skips  
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips  
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose’s cheek,  
Then blows the shuddering leaf between  
his lips,

Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,  
Like a fray’d bird in the grey owlet’s beak.

And lo! upon my fix’d delighted ken  
Appear’d the loyal Fays.—Some by de-  
grees

Crept from the primrose buds that open’d  
then,

And some from bell-shap’d blossoms like  
the bees,

Some from the dewy meads, and rushy  
leas,

Flew up like chafers when the rustics  
pass;

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Some from the rivers, others from tall  
trees  
Dropp'd, like shed blossoms, silent to the  
grass,  
Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,  
Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry  
swain;  
And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms  
romantic,  
Came too, from distance, in her tiny wain,  
Fresh dripping from a cloud—some bloomy  
rain,  
Then circling the bright Moon, had washed  
her car,  
And still bedew'd it with a various stain:  
Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,  
Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,  
Was absent, whether some distemper'd  
spleen  
Kept him and his fair mate' unreconciled,  
Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race  
had been  
Sometime obnoxious), kept him from his  
queen,  
And made her now peruse the starry skies  
Prophetical, with such an absent mien;



*THE PLEA OF THE*

Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,  
And oft the Moon was incensed with her  
sighs—

Which made the elves sport drearily, and  
soon

Their hushing dances languish'd to a  
stand,

Like midnight leaves when, as the Zephyrs  
swoon,

All on their drooping stems they sink un-  
fann'd,—

So into silence droop'd the fairy band,  
To see their empress dear so pale and  
still,

Crowding her softly round on either hand,  
As pale as frosty snow-drops, and as chill,  
To whom the sceptred dame reveals her  
ill.

“Alas,” quoth she, “ye know our fairy  
lives

Are leased upon the fickle faith of men;  
Not measured out against fate's mortal  
knives,

Like human gossamers, we perish when  
We fade, and are forgot in worldly ken,—  
Though poesy has thus prolong'd our date,  
Thanks be to the sweet Bard's auspicious  
pen

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

That rescued us so long!—howbeit of late  
I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.

“And this dull day my melancholy sleep  
Hath been so throng’d with images of  
    woe,

That even now I cannot choose but weep  
To think this was some sad prophetic show  
Of future horror to befall us so,—  
Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,—  
Yea, our poor empire’s fall and over-  
    throw,—

For this was my long vision’s dreadful  
    stress,  
And when I waked my trouble was not  
    less.

“Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,  
Such leaden weight dragg’d these Icarian  
    wings,

My faithless wand was wavering and  
    weak,

And slimy toads had trespass’d in our  
    rings—

The birds refused to sing for me—all  
    things

Disown’d their old allegiance to our spells;  
The rude bees prick’d me with their rebel  
    stings;

*THE PLEA OF THE*

And, when I pass'd, the valley-lily's bells  
Rang out, methought, most melancholy  
knells.

"And ever on the faint and flagging air  
A doleful spirit with a dreary note  
Cried in my fearful ear, 'Prepare! pre-  
pare!'

Which soon I knew came from a raven's  
throat,

Perch'd on a cypress bough not far re-  
mote,—

A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,  
That alway cometh with his soot-black  
coat

To make hearts dreary:—for he is a blot  
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot!—

"Wherefore some while I bribed him to  
be mute,

With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,  
Which barely I appeased, when some fresh  
bruit

Startled me all aheap!—and soon I saw  
The horriddest shape that ever raised my  
awe,—

A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,  
Such as in elder times, devoid of law,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

With wicked might grieved the primeval  
ball,  
And this was sure the deadliest of them  
all!

"Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,  
With bloody jaws, and frost upon his  
crown;  
So from his barren poll one hoary lock  
Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,  
Well-nigh to where his frosty brows did  
frown  
Like jagged icicles at cottage eaves;  
And for his coronal he wore some brown  
And bristled ears gather'd from Ceres'  
sheaves,  
Entwined with certain sere and russet  
leaves.

"And lo! upon a mast rear'd far aloft,  
He bore a very bright and crescent blade,  
The which he waved so dreadfully, and  
oft,  
In meditative spite, that, sore dismay'd,  
I crept into an acorn-cup for shade;  
Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by:  
I trow his look was dreadful, for it made  
The trembling birds betake them to the  
sky,  
For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.



*THE PLEA OF THE*

"And ever as he sigh'd, his foggy breath  
Blurr'd out the landscape like a flight of  
smoke;

Thence knew I this was either dreary  
Death

Or Time, who leads all creatures to his  
stroke.

Ah wretched me!"—Here, even as she  
spoke,

The melancholy Shape came gliding in,  
And lean'd his back against an antique oak,  
Folding his wings, that were so fine and  
thin,

They scarce were seen against the Dryad's  
skin.

Then what a fear seized all the little rout!  
Look how a flock of panick'd sheep will  
stare—

And huddle close—and start—and wheel  
about,

Watching the roaming mongrel here and  
there,—

So did that sudden Apparition scare  
All close ahead those small affrighted  
things;

Nor sought they now the safety of the air,  
As if some leaden spell withheld their  
wings;

But who can fly that ancientest of Kings?

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling  
tear

And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,  
Bidding him spare, for love, her lieges  
dear:

"Alas!" quoth she, "is there no nodding  
wheat

Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more  
meet,—

Or wither'd leaves to ravish from the  
tree,—

Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat?  
Think but what vaunting monuments  
there be

Built in spite and mockery of thee.

"O fret away the fabric walls of Fame,  
And grind down marble Cæsars with the  
dust:

Make tombs inscriptionless—raze each  
high name,

And waste old armours of renown with  
rust:

Do all of this, and thy revenge is just:  
Make such decays the trophies of thy  
prime,

And check Ambition's overweening lust,  
That dares exterminating war with  
Time,—

But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.

*THE PLEA OF THE*

“Frail feeble sprites!—the children of a dream!

Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,  
Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,  
Living but in the sun's indulgent ken,  
And when that light withdraws, withdrawing then;—

So do we flutter in the glance of youth  
And fervid fancy,—and so perish when  
The eye of faith grows aged;—in sad truth,

Feeling thy sway, O Time! though not  
thy tooth!

“Where be those old divinities forlorn,  
That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream?  
Alas! their memories are dimm'd and torn,  
Like the remainder tatters of a dream:  
So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem;—

For us the same dark trench Oblivion  
delves,  
That holds the wastes of every human  
scheme.

O spare us then,—and these our pretty  
elves,—

We soon, alas! shall perish of ourselves!”

Now as she ended, with a sigh, to name  
Those old Olympians, scatter'd by the whirl

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Of Fortune's giddy wheel and brought to  
shame,  
Methought a scornful and malignant curl  
Show'd on the lips of that malicious churl,  
To think what noble havocs he had made;  
So that I fear'd he all at once would hurl  
The harmless fairies into endless shade,—  
Howbeit he stopp'd awhile to whet his  
blade.

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail  
Rise up in concert from their mingled  
dread;  
Pity it was to see them, all so pale,  
Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed;—  
But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,  
That hung between two branches of a briar,  
And 'gan to swing and gambol heels o'er  
head,  
Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,  
For him no present grief could long  
inspire.

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous  
drops,  
Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,  
Bedews a pathway from her throne;—and  
stops  
Before the foot of her arch enemy,  
And with her little arms enfolds his knee,



## THE PLEA OF THE

That shows more gristly from that fair  
embrace;

But she will ne'er depart. "Alas!" quoth  
she,

"My painful fingers I will here enlace  
Till I have gain'd your pity for our race.

"What have we ever done to earn this  
grudge,

And hate—(if not too humble for thy  
hating?)—

Look o'er our labours and our lives, and  
judge

If there be any ills of our creating;

For we are very kindly creatures, dating  
With nature's charities still sweet and  
bland:—

O think this murder worthy of debating!"—  
Herewith she makes a signal with her  
hand,

To beckon someone from the Fairy band.

Anon I saw one of those elfin things,

Clad all in white like any chorister,

Come fluttering forth on his melodious  
wings,

That made soft music at each little stir,

But something louder than a bee's demur

Before he lights upon a bunch of broom,

And thus 'gan he with Saturn to confer,—

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

And O his voice was sweet, touch'd with  
the gloom  
Of that sad theme that argued of his doom!

Quoth he, "We make all melodies our  
care,

That no false discords may offend the Sun,  
Music's great master—tuning everywhere  
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one  
Duly to place and season, so that none  
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn  
The shrill sweet lark; and when the day is  
done,

Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,  
That singeth with her breast against a  
thorn.

"We gather in loud choirs the twittering  
race,

That make a chorus with their single note;  
And tend on new-fledged birds in every  
place,

That duly they may get their tunes by rote;  
And oft, like echoes, answering remote,  
We hide in thickets from the feather'd  
throng,

And strain in rivalry each throbbing  
throat,

Singing in shrill responses all day long,  
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.

THE PLEA OF THE

"Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou  
dost love

The raining music from a morning cloud,  
When vanish'd larks are carolling above,  
To wake Apollo with their pipings loud;—  
If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud  
The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,  
Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd,  
And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell  
Whene'er thou listenest to Philomel."

Then Saturn thus:—"Sweet is the merry  
lark,

That carols in man's ear so clear and  
strong;

And youth must love to listen in the dark  
That tuneful elegy of Tereus' wrong;

But I have heard that ancient strain too  
long,

For sweet is sweet but when a little  
strange,

And I grow weary for some newer song;  
For wherefore had I wings, unless to range  
Through all things mutable, from change  
to change?

"But wouldst thou hear the melodies of  
Time,

Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness  
roll

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Over hush'd cities, and the midnight chime  
Sounds from their hundred clocks, and  
deep bells toll

Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,  
Saying, 'Time shall be final of all things,  
Whose late, last voice must elegize the  
whole,'—

O then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,  
And make the wide air tremble while it  
rings!"

Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek  
address,

Saying, "We be the handmaids of the  
Spring,

In sign whereof, May, the quaint broi-  
deress,

Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy  
wing.

We tend upon buds' birth and blossoming,  
And count the leafy tributes that they  
owe—

As, so much to the earth—so much to fling  
In showers to the brook—so much to go  
In whirlwinds to the clouds that made  
them grow.

"The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,  
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green;



*THE PLEA OF THE*

Pansies, and those veil'd nuns, meek  
violets,  
Sighing to that warm world from which  
they screen;  
And golden daffodils, pluck'd for May's  
Queen;  
And lonely harebells, quaking on the  
heath;  
And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,  
Whose tuneful voice, turn'd fragrance in  
his breath,  
Kiss'd by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.

“The widow'd primrose weeping to the  
moon,  
And saffron crocus in whose chalice bright  
A cool libation hoarded for the noon  
Is kept—and she that purifies the light,  
The virgin lily, faithful to her white,  
Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame;  
And the most dainty rose, Aurora's sprite,  
Our every godchild, by whatever name—  
Spare us our lives, for we did nurse the  
same!”

Then that old Mower stamp'd his heel, and  
struck  
His hurtful scythe against the harmless  
ground,  
Saying, “Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crown'd  
With flow'ry chaplets, save when they are  
found

Wither'd?—Whenever have I pluck'd a  
rose,

Except to scatter its vain leaves around?  
For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,  
And bring decay on every flow'r that blows.

“Or when am I so wroth as when I view  
The wanton pride of Summer;—how she  
decks

The birthday world with blossoms ever  
new,

As if Time had not lived, and heap'd great  
wrecks

Of years on years?—O then I bravely vex  
And catch the gay Months in their gaudy  
plight,

And slay them with the wreaths about their  
necks,

Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,  
And raise great trophies to my ancient  
might.”

Then saith another, “We are kindly things,  
And like her offspring nestle with the  
dove,—

Witness these hearts embroider'd on our  
wings,

## THE PLEA OF THE

To show our constant patronage of love :—  
We sit at even, in sweet bow'rs above  
Lovers, and shake rich odours on the air,  
To mingle with their sighs; and still re-  
move

The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear  
Their privacy, and haunt some other where.

“And we are near the mother when she sits  
Beside her infant in its wicker bed;  
And we are in the fairy scene that flits  
Across its tender brain: sweet dreams we  
shed,

And whilst the little merry soul is fled  
Away, to sport with our young elves, the  
while

We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,  
And tickle the soft lips until they smile,  
So that their careful parents they beguile.

“O then, if ever thou hast breathed a vow  
At Love's dear portal, or at pale moon-rise  
Crush'd the dear curl on a regardful brow  
That did not frown thee from thy honey  
prize—

If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,  
And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts  
within

To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,  
For Love's dear sake, let us thy pity win!"

Then Saturn fiercely thus:—"What joy  
have I

In tender babes, that have devour'd mine  
own,

Whenever to the light I heard them cry,  
Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone?

Whereon, till now, is my great hunger  
shown,

In monstrous dint of my enormous tooth;  
And,—but the peopled world is too full  
grown

For hunger's edge,—I would consume all  
youth

At one great meal, without delay or ruth!

"For I am well nigh craz'd and wild to  
hear

How boastful fathers taunt me with their  
breed,

Saying, 'We shall not die nor disappear,  
But in these other selves, ourselves succeed,

Ev'n as ripe flowers pass into their seed  
Only to be renew'd from prime to prime,'

All of which boastings I am forced to read,  
Besides a thousand challenges to Time

Which bragging lovers have compiled in  
rhyme.



## THE PLEA OF THE

“Wherefore, when they are sweetly met  
o’ nights,  
There will I steal, and with my hurried  
hand  
Startle them suddenly from their delights  
Before the next encounter hath been plann’d,  
Ravishing hours in little minutes spann’d;  
But when they say farewell, and grieve  
apart,  
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,  
Meanwhile their many tears encrust my  
dart,  
And with a ragged edge cut heart from  
heart.”

Then next a merry Woodsman, clad in  
green,  
Stept vanward from his mates, that idly  
stood  
Each at his proper ease, as they had been  
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,  
And wore the livery of Robin Hood,  
Who wont in forest shades to dine and  
sup,—  
So came this chief right frankly, and made  
good  
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke  
up,  
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn’s  
cup:—

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

"We be small foresters and gay, who tend  
On trees, and all their furniture of green,  
Training the young boughs airily to bend,  
And show blue snatches of the sky between;—

Or knit more close intricacies, to screen  
Birds' crafty dwellings as may hide them  
best,

But most the timid blackbird's—she, that  
seen,

Will bear black poisonous berries to her  
nest,

Lest man should cage the darlings of her  
breast.

"We bend each tree in proper attitude,  
And fountain willows train in silvery falls;  
We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,  
And verdant aisles leading to Dryad's halls,  
Or deep recesses where the Echo calls;—  
We shape all plummy trees against the sky,  
And carve tall elms' Corinthian capitals,—  
When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,  
Men say the tapping woodpecker is nigh.

"Sometimes we scoop the squirrel's hollow  
cell,  
And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees'  
rind,

*THE PLEA OF THE*

That haply some lone musing wight may  
spell

Dainty Aminta,—Gentle Rosalind,—  
Or chastest Laura,—sweetly call'd to mind  
In sylvan solitudes, ere he lies down;—  
And sometimes we enrich grey stems, with  
twined

And vagrant ivy,—or rich moss, whose  
brown

Burns into gold as the warm sun goes  
down.

“And, lastly, for mirth's sake and Christ-  
mas cheer,

We bear the seedling berries, for increase,  
To graft the Druid oaks from year to year,  
Careful that mistletoe may never cease;—  
Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady  
peace

Of sombre forests, or to see light break  
Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring  
release

Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ache,  
Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad's  
sake.”

Then Saturn, with a frown:—“Go forth,  
and fell

Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by  
Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of  
sky

Through tangled branches, for ye shall not  
spy

The next green generation of the tree;  
But hence with the dead leaves, whene'er  
they fly,—

Which in the bleak air I would rather see,  
Than flights of the most tuneful birds  
that be.

“For I dislike all prime and verdant pets,  
Ivy except, that on the aged wall  
Preys with its worm-like roots, and daily  
frets,

The crumbled tower it seems to league  
withal,

King-like, worn down by its own coronal:—  
Neither in forest haunts love I to won,  
Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,  
And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few  
leaves on,

Or bare—like Nature in her skeleton.

“For then sit I amongst the crooked  
boughs,

Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs;  
And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,  
Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes;—



## THE PLEA OF THE

But Hope must have green bowers and blue  
skies,  
And must be courted with the gauds of  
spring;  
Whilst Youth leans god-like on her lap,  
and cries  
'What shall we always do, but love and  
sing?'—  
And Time is reckon'd a discarded thing."

Here in my dream it made me fret to see  
How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while  
Had blithely jested with calamity,  
With mistim'd mirth mocking the doleful  
style  
Of his sad comrades, till it raised my bile  
To see him so reflect their grief aside,  
Turning their solemn looks to half a smile—  
Like a straight stick shown crooked in the  
tide;—  
But soon a novel advocate I spied.

Quoth he—"We teach all natures to fulfil  
Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts  
meet,—  
The bee's sweet alchemy,—the spider's  
skill,—  
The pismire's care to garner up his wheat,—  
And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

The lapwing's cunning to preserve her  
nest,—

But most, that lesser pelican, the sweet  
And shrilly ruddock, with its bleeding  
breast,

Its tender pity of poor babes distrest.

“Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in  
sleek skins

Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves  
From our example; so the spider spins,  
And eke the silk-worm pattern'd by our-  
selves:

Sometimes we travail on the summer  
shelves

Of early bees, and busy toils commence,  
Watch'd of wise men, that know not we  
are elves,

But gaze and marvel at our stretch of  
sense,

And praise our human-like intelligence.

“Wherefore, by thy delight in that old  
tale,

And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,  
What time the leaves are scatter'd by the  
gale,

Mindful of that old forest burying;—

As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,

*THE PLEA OF THE*

For whom our craft most curiously contrives,

If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,  
To take his honey-bag,—spare us our lives,  
And we will pay the ransom in full hives."

"Now by my glass," quoth Time, "ye do offend

In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,

And frugal ants, whose millions would  
• have end,

But they lay up for need a timely store,  
And travail with the seasons evermore;  
Whereas Great Mammoth long hath pass'd  
away,

And none but I can tell what hide he wore;  
Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a  
day,

In riddling wonder his great bones survey."

Then came an elf, right beauteous to behold,  
Whose coat was like a brooklet that the  
sun

Hath all embroider'd with its crooked gold,  
It was so quaintly wrought, and overrun  
• With spangled trceries,—most meet for  
one

That was a warden of the pearly streams;—  
And as he stept out of the shadows dun,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

His jewels sparkled in the pale moon's  
gleams  
And shot into the air their pointed beams.

Quoth he,—“ We bear the cold and silver  
keys  
Of bubbling springs and fountains, that  
below  
Course thro' the veiny earth,—which when  
they freeze  
Into hard chrysolites, we bid to flow.  
Creeping like subtle snakes, when, as they  
go,  
We guide their windings to melodious falls,  
At whose soft murmurings, so sweet and  
low,  
Poets have tun'd their smoothest madrigals,  
To sing to ladies in their banquet halls.

“ And when the hot sun with his steadfast  
heat  
Parches the river god,—whose dusty urn  
Drips miserly, till soon his crystal feet  
Against his pebbly floor wax faint and  
burn,  
And languid fish, unpois'd, grow sick and  
yearn,—  
Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,  
And little channels dig, wherein we turn



*THE PLEA OF THE*

The threadworn rivulet, that all forsook  
The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.

“Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green  
meads,

With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—  
In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—  
And all reflections in a streamlet made,  
Haply of thy own love, that, disarray’d,  
Kills the fair lily with a livelier white,—  
By silver trouts upspringing from green  
shade,

And winking stars reduplicate at night,  
Spare us, poor ministers to such delight.”

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks  
Mov’d not the spiteful Shade:—Quoth he,

“Your taste

Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks  
And slavish rivulets that run to waste  
In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals,  
haste

To swell the vast dominion of the sea,  
In whose great presence I am held disgrac’d.  
And neighbour’d with a king that rivals me  
In ancient might and hoary majesty.

“Whereas I rul’d in Chaos, and still keep  
The awful secrets of that ancient dearth,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Before the briny fountains of the deep  
Brimm'd up the hollow cavities of earth ;—  
I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,  
Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,  
And infant Titans of enormous girth,  
Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on  
the rocks,  
Stunning the early world with frequent  
shocks.

“ Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous  
brood,  
That scar'd the world?—By this sharp  
scythe they fell,  
And half the sky was curdled with their  
blood:  
So have all primal giants sigh'd farewell.  
No wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,  
No pearly Naiads. All their days are done  
That strove with Time, untimely, to excel;  
Wherefore I raz'd their progenies, and none  
But my great shadow intercepts the sun!”

Then saith the timid Fay—“O, mighty  
Time!  
Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans'  
fall,  
For they were stain'd with many a bloody  
crime:

## THE PLEA OF THE

Great giants work great wrongs,—but we  
are small,  
For love goes lowly;—but Oppression's  
tall,  
And with surpassing strides goes foremost  
still  
Where love indeed can hardly reach at all;  
Like a poor dwarf o'erburthen'd with  
good will,  
That labours to efface the tracks of ill.—

“Man even strives with Man, but we  
eschew  
The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor;  
Nay, we are gentle as sweet heaven's dew,  
Beside the red and horrid drops of war,  
Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,  
Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite:  
For in the gentle breast we ne'er withdraw,  
But only when all love hath taken flight,  
And youth's warm gracious heart is harden'd  
quite.

“So are our gentle natures intertwin'd  
With sweet humanities, and closely knit  
In kindly sympathy with human kind.  
Witness how we befriend, with elfin wit,  
All hopeless maids and lovers,—nor omit  
Magical succours unto hearts forlorn:—  
We charm man's life, and do not perish it;—

*MIDSUMMER FAIRIES*

So judge us by the helps we show'd this morn,  
To one who held his wretched days in scorn.

"'T was nigh sweet Amwell;—for the  
Queen had task'd  
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,  
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet  
bask'd;  
Wherefore some patient man we thought  
to see,  
Planted in moss-grown rushes to the knee,  
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim;  
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he  
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,  
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.

"His face was ashy pale, and leaden care  
Had sunk the levell'd arches of his brow,  
Once bridges for his joyous thoughts to  
fare  
Over those melancholy springs and slow,  
That from his piteous eyes began to flow,  
And fell anon into the chilly stream;  
Which, as his mimick'd image show'd  
below,  
Wrinkled his face with many a needless  
seam,  
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.



### *THE PLEA OF THE*

"And lo! upon the air we saw him stretch  
His passionate arms; and, in a wayward  
strain,

He 'gan to elegize that fellow wretch  
That with mute gestures answer'd him  
again,

Saying, 'Poor slave, how long wilt thou  
remain

Life's sad weak captive in a prison strong,  
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,  
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong?—  
Thou wear'st that mortal livery too long!

"This, with more spleenful speeches and  
some tears,

When he had spent upon the imaged wave,  
Speedily I conven'd my elfin peers  
Under the lily-cups, that we might save  
This woeful mortal from a wilful grave  
By shrewd diversions of his mind's regret,  
Seeing he was mere melancholy's slave,  
That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,  
And straight was tangled in her secret net.

"Therefore, as still he watch'd the water's  
flow,

Daintily we transform'd, and with bright  
fins

Came glancing through the gloom; some  
from below

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Rose like dim fancies when a dream  
begins,  
Snatching the light upon their purple  
skins;  
Then under the broad leaves made slow  
retire:  
One like a golden galley bravely wins  
Its radiant course,—another glows like  
fire,—  
Making that wayward man our pranks  
admire.

“And so he banish’d thought, and quite  
forgot  
All contemplation of that wretched face;  
And so we wil’d him from that lonely spot  
Along the river’s brink; till, by heaven’s  
grace,  
He met a gentle haunter of the place,  
Full of sweet wisdom gather’d from the  
brooks,  
Who there discuss’d his melancholy case  
With wholesome texts learn’d from kind  
nature’s books,  
Meanwhile he newly trimm’d his lines and  
hooks.”

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel  
now—

“Let me remember how I sav’d a man,

## *THE PLEA OF THE*

Whose fatal noose was fasten'd on a  
bough,  
Intended to abridge his sad life's span;  
For haply I was by when he began  
His stern soliloquy in life's dispraise,  
And overheard his melancholy plan,  
How he had made a vow to end his days,  
And therefore follow'd him in all his ways.

"Through brake and tangled copse, for  
much he loath'd  
All populous haunts, and roam'd in forests  
rude,  
To hide himself from man. But I had  
cloth'd  
My delicate limbs with plumes, and still  
pursued,  
Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,  
Till we were come beside an ancient tree  
Late blasted by a storm. Here he re-  
new'd  
His loud complaints,—choosing that spot  
to be  
The scene of his last horrid tragedy.

"It was a wild and melancholy glen,  
Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,  
Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,  
Push'd through the rotten sod for fear's  
remark:

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,  
Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous  
fray,  
Besides sleek ashes with their dappled  
bark,  
Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,  
With many blasted oaks moss-grown and  
grey.

“But here upon his final desperate clause  
Suddenly I pronounc’d so sweet a strain,  
Like a pang’d nightingale, it made him  
pause,  
Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,  
The sad remainder oozing from his brain  
In timely ecstasies of healing tears,  
Which through his ardent eyes began to  
drain;—  
Meanwhile the deadly Fates unclos’d their  
shears:—  
So pity me and all my fated peers!”

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time  
hush’d:  
When with the hoary shape a fresh tongue  
pleads,  
And red as rose the gentle Fairy blush’d  
To read the record of her own good  
deeds:—



*THE PLEA OF THE*

"It chanc'd," quoth she, "in seeking  
through the meads  
For honied cowslips, sweetest in the morn,  
Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy  
beads,  
And Echo answer'd to the huntsman's  
horn,  
We found a babe left in the swarths for-  
lorn.

"A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,  
Begot of love, and yet no love begetting;  
Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to  
wring;  
And too soon banish'd from a mother's  
petting,  
To churlish nurture and the wide world's  
fretting,  
For alien pity and unnatural care;—  
Alas! to see how the cold dew kept wet-  
ting  
His childish coats, and dabbled all his  
hair,  
Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

"His pretty pouting mouth, witless of  
speech,  
Lay half-way open like a rose-lipp'd shell;  
And his young cheek was softer than a  
peach,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Whereon his tears, for roundness, could  
not dwell,  
But quickly roll'd themselves to pearls, and  
fell,  
Some on the grass, and some against his  
hand,  
Or haply wander'd to the dimpled well,  
Which love beside his mouth had sweetly  
plann'd,  
Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings  
bland.

"Pity it was to see those frequent tears  
Falling regardless from his friendless eyes;  
There was such beauty in those twin blue  
spheres,  
As any mother's heart might leap to prize;  
Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies  
Softened betwixt two clouds, both clear  
and mild;—  
Just touch'd with thought, and yet not  
over wise,  
They show'd the gentle spirit of a child,  
Not yet by care or any craft defiled.

"Pity it was to see the ardent sun  
Scorching his helpless limbs—it shone so  
warm;  
For kindly shade or shelter he had none,

*THE PLEA OF THE*

Nor mother's gentle breast, come fair or  
storm.

Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform

Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly  
cries,

All round the infant noisily we swarm,  
Haply some passing rustic to advise—  
Whilst providential Heaven our care espies,

“And sends full soon a tender-hearted  
hind,

Who, wond'ring at our loud unusual  
note,

“Strays curiously aside, and so doth find  
The orphan child laid in the grass remote,

And laps the foundling in his russet coat,  
Who thence was nurtured in his kindly  
cot:

But how he prosper'd let proud London  
quote,

How wise, how rich, and how renown'd  
he got,

And chief of all her citizens, I wot.

“Witness his goodly vessels on the  
Thames,

Whose holds were fraught with costly  
merchandise,—

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly  
dames,

And gorgeous silks that Samarcand sup-  
plies:

Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,  
The mart of merchants from the East and  
West;

Whose slender summit, pointing to the  
skies,

Still bears, in token of his grateful breast,  
The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest—

“The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,  
That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,  
Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,  
Inspired with dew to leap and sing:—  
So let us also live, eternal King!

Partakers of the green and pleasant  
earth:—

Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,  
That, like a mote, shines in the smile of  
mirth:—

Enough there is of joy's decrease and  
dearth!

“Enough of pleasure, and delight, and  
beauty,

Perish'd and gone, and hasting to decay;—  
Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty  
Or spite it is to havoc and to slay:



## THE PLEA OF THE

Too many a lovely race razed quite away,  
Hath left large gaps in life and human  
loving:—

Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,  
And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and  
groans, reproving  
Thy desolating hand for our removing."

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,  
And, looking up, I saw the antic Puck  
Grappling with Time, who clutch'd him  
like a fly,

Victim of his own sport,—the jester's luck!  
He, whilst his fellows grieved, poor wight,  
had stuck

His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's  
brow,

And now his ear, and now his beard,  
would pluck;

Whereas the angry churl had snatch'd him  
now,

Crying, "Thou impish mischief, who art  
thou!"

"Alas!" quoth Puck, "a little random elf,  
Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,  
For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,  
But for no other purpose, worth, or need;  
And yet withal of a most happy breed;—

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,  
My partner dear in many a prankish deed  
To make dame Laughter hold her jolly  
sides,  
Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.

"'Tis we that bob the angler's idle cork,  
Till e'en the patient man breathes half a  
curse;

We steal the morsel from the gossip's fork,  
And curdling looks with secret straws dis-  
perse,

Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse:  
And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,  
We change, some mothers say, the child at  
nurse;

But any graver purpose to fulfil,  
We have not wit enough, and scarce the  
will.

"We never let the canker melancholy  
To gather on our faces like a rust,  
But gloss our features with some change  
of folly,

Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,  
But only sorrowing when sorrow must:  
We ruminate no sage's solemn cud,  
But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust  
To frisk upon a wind,—whereas the flood  
Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.

## THE PLEA OF THE

"Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,  
Who gloze her lively universal law,  
As if she had not formed our cheerful  
feature

To be so tickled with the slightest straw!  
So let them vex their mumping mouths,  
and draw

The corners downward, like a wat'ry moon,  
And deal in gusty sighs and rainy flaw—  
We will not woo foul weather all too soon,  
Or nurse November on the lap of June.

"For ours are winging sprites, like any  
bird,

That shun all stagnant settlements of  
grief;

And even in our rest our hearts are stirr'd,  
Like insects settled on a dancing leaf:—

This is our small philosophy in brief,  
Which thus to teach hath set me all agape:

But dost thou relish it? O hoary chief!  
Unclasp thy crooked fingers from my  
nape,

And I will show thee many a pleasant  
scrape."

Then Saturn thus:—shaking his crooked  
blade

O'erhead, which made aloft a lightning  
flash

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

In all the fairies' eyes, dismally fray'd!  
His ensuing voice came like the thunder  
crash—

Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or  
ash—

"Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing!  
Whom nought can frighten, sadden, or  
abash,—

To hope my solemn countenance to wring  
To idiot smiles!—but I will prune thy  
wing!

"Lo! this most awful handle of my scythe  
Stood once a May-pole, with a flowery  
crown,

Which rustics danced around, and maidens  
blithe,

To wanton pipings;—but I pluck'd it  
down,

And robed the May Queen in a church-  
yard gown,

Turning her buds to rosemary and rue;

And all their merry minstrelsy did drown,

And laid each lusty leaper in the dew;—

So thou shalt fare—and every jovial crew!"

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to  
clutch

His mortal engine with each grisly hand,



## *THE PLEA OF THE*

Which frights the elfin progeny so much,  
They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand  
All round Titania, like the queen bee's  
band,

With sighs and tears and very shrieks of  
woe!—

Meanwhile, some moving argument I  
plann'd,

To make the stern Shade merciful,—when  
lo!

He drops his fatal scythe without a blow!

For, just at need, a timely Apparition  
Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt;  
Making him change his horrible position  
To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,  
That dares Time's irresistible affront,  
Whose strokes have scarr'd even the gods  
of old;—

Whereas this seem'd a mortal, at mere hunt  
For coneys, lighted by the moonshine cold,  
Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold,

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,  
Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,  
And holds her beauty for a while in gaze,  
With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant  
hap;

And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

As if in question of this magic chance,  
Laid like a dream upon the green earth's  
lap;

And then upon old Saturn turns askance,  
Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance:—

“Oh these be Fancy's revellers by night!  
Stealthy companions of the downy moth—  
Diana's motes, that flit in her pale light,  
Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth;—  
These be the feasters on night's silvercloth,—  
The gnat with shrilly trump is their convener,  
Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing  
loth,

With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,  
Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.

“These be the pretty genii of the flow'rs,  
Daintily fed with honey and pure dew—  
Midsummer's phantoms in her dreaming  
hours,

King Oberon, and all his merry crew,  
The darling puppets of Romance's view;  
Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we  
call them,

Famous for patronage of lovers true;—  
Nor harm they act, neither shall harm befall  
them,

So do not thus with crabbed frowns appal  
them.”

*THE PLEA OF THE*

O what a cry was Saturn's then!—it made  
The fairies quake. "What care I for their  
pranks,

However they may lovers choose to aid,  
Or dance their roundelays on flow'ry  
banks?—

Long must they dance before they earn my  
thanks,—

So step aside, to some far safer spot,  
Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their  
ranks,

And leave them in the sun, like weeds, to  
rot,

And with the next day's sun to be forgot."

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen;  
But still the gracious Shade disarm'd his  
aim,

Stepping with brave alacrity between,  
And made his sere arm powerless and tame.

His be perpetual glory, for the shame  
Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat!—

But I must tell, how here Titania came  
With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat  
His kindly succour, in sad tones, but sweet,

Saying, "Thou seest a wretched queen  
before thee,

The fading power of a failing land,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Who for her kingdom kneeleth to implore  
thee,

Now menaced by this tyrant's spoiling hand;  
No one but thee can hopefully withstand  
That crooked blade, he longeth so to lift.  
I pray thee blind him with his own vile  
sand,

Which only times all ruins by its drift,  
Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.

"Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,  
That hangs upon his bald and barren crown;  
And we will sing to see him so rebuff'd,  
And lend our little mights to pull him down,  
And make brave sport of his malicious frown,  
For all his boastful mockery o'er men;  
For thou wast born, I know, for this renown,  
By my most magical and inward ken,  
That readeth ev'n at Fate's forestalling pen.

"Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,  
And by thy brow's most fair and ample span,  
Thought's glorious palace, framed for fancies  
high,

And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,  
I know the signs of an immortal man,—  
Nature's chief darling, and illustrious mate,  
Destined to foil old Death's oblivious plan,  
And shine untarnish'd by the fogs of Fate,  
Time's famous rival till the final date!



*THE PLEA OF THE*

"O shield us then from this usurping Time,  
And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams;  
And teach thee tunes, to wed unto thy  
rhyme,

And dance about thee in all midnight gleams.  
Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,  
Such as no mortal's eye hath ever seen;  
And, for thy love to us in our extremes,  
Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,  
Such as no poet's wreath hath ever been!

"And we'll distil thee aromatic dew,  
To charm thy sense, when there shall be no  
flow'rs;

And flavour'd syrups in thy drinks infuse,  
And teach the nightingale to haunt thy  
bow'rs.

And with our games divert thy weariest  
hours,

With all that elfin wits can e'er devise.  
And, this churl dead, there'll be no hasting  
hours

To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies:"—  
Here she was stopp'd by Saturn's furious  
cries.

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes  
anew,

Saying, "Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and  
scoop

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Thy hollow coffin in some churchyard yew,  
Or make th' autumnal flow'rs turn pale,  
and droop;

Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop  
Under fat sheaves,—or blast the piny  
grove;—

But here thou shalt not harm this pretty  
group,

Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,  
But leas'd on Nature's loveliness and love.

“'Tis these that free the small entangled  
fly,

Caught in the venom'd spider's crafty  
snare;—

These be the petty surgeons that apply  
The healing balsams to the wounded hare,  
Bedded in bloody fern, no creature's care!—

These be providers for the orphan brood,  
Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,  
Quitting with gaping bill her darling's food,  
Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.

“'Tis these befriend the timid trembling  
stag,

When, with a bursting heart beset with  
fears,

He feels his saving speed begin to flag;  
For then they quench the fatal taint with  
tears,

## THE PLEA OF THE

And prompt fresh shifts in his alarum'd  
ears,  
So piteously they view all bloody morts;  
Or if the gunner, with his arm, appears,  
Like noisy pyes and jays, with harsh re-  
ports,  
They warn the wild fowl of his deadly  
sports.

“For these are kindly ministers of nature,  
To soothe all covert hurts and dumb dis-  
tress;  
Pretty they be, and very small of stature,—  
For mercy still consorts with littleness;—  
Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,  
And mischief grossest in this world of  
wrong;—  
So do these charitable dwarfs redress  
The tenfold ravages of giants strong,  
To whom great malice and great might  
belong.

“Likewise to them are Poets much be-  
holden  
For secret favours in the midnight glooms:  
Brave Spenser quaff'd out of their goblets  
golden,  
And saw their tables spread of prompt  
mushrooms,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms  
Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,  
Like humming bees busy about the brooms,—  
And glanc'd this fair queen's witchery full  
    oft,  
And in her magic wain soared far aloft.

“Nay, I myself, though mortal, once was  
    nurs'd

By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,  
And in my childish ear glib Mab rehears'd  
Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,  
Telling me wonders of the moon and earth;  
My gramarye at her grave lap I conn'd,  
Where Puck hath been conven'd to make  
    me mirth;

I have had from Queen Titania tokens  
    fond,  
And toy'd with Oberon's permitted wand.

“With figs and plums and Persian dates  
    they fed me,

And delicate cates after my sunset meal,  
And took me by my childish hand, and led  
    me

By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,  
Whose awful bases deep dark woods con-  
    ceal,

Staining some dead lake with their verdant  
    dyes:



*THE PLEA OF THE*

And when the West sparkled at Phœbus'  
wheel,  
With fairy euphrasy they purg'd mine eyes,  
To let me see their cities in the skies.

"'Twas they first school'd my young  
imagination  
To take its flights like any new-fledg'd  
bird,  
And show'd the span of winged meditation  
Stretch'd wider than things grossly seen or  
heard.  
With sweet swift Ariel how I soar'd and  
stirr'd  
The fragrant blooms of spiritual bow'rs!  
'Twas they endear'd what I have still pre-  
ferr'd,  
Nature's blest attributes and balmy pow'rs,  
Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds  
and flow'rs!

"Wherefore with all true loyalty and duty  
Will I regard them in my honouring  
rhyme,  
With love for love, and homages to beauty,  
And magic thoughts gather'd in night's  
cool clime.  
With studious verse trancing the dragon  
Time,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Strong as old Merlin's necromantic spells;  
So these dear monarchs of the summer's  
    prime  
Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,  
Till shrill larks warn them to their flowery  
    cells."

Look how a poison'd man turns livid black,  
Drugg'd with a cup of deadly hellebore,  
That sets his horrid features all at rack,—  
So seem'd these words into the ear to  
    pour  
Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar  
Of mortal pain and spite and utmost rage,  
Wherewith his grisly arm he rais'd once  
    more,  
And bade the cluster'd sinews all engage,  
As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

Whereas the blade flash'd on the dinted  
    ground,  
Down through his steadfast foe, yet made  
    no scar  
On that immortal Shade, or death-like  
    wound;  
But Time was long benumb'd, and stood  
    ajar,  
And then with baffled rage took flight  
    afar,  
To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,

## THE PLEA OF THE

Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and  
mar,  
Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of  
doom,  
Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's  
tomb.

Howbeit he vanish'd in the forest shade,  
Distantly heard as if some grumbling  
pard,  
And, like Nymph Echo to a sound decay'd;—  
Meanwhile the fays cluster'd the gracious  
Bard,  
The darling centre of their dear regard:  
Besides of sundry dances on the green,  
Never was mortal man so brightly starr'd,  
Or won such pretty homages, I ween.  
“Nod to him, Elves!” cries the melodious  
queen.

“Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round  
about him,  
And quite enclose him with your pretty  
crowd,  
And touch him lovingly, for that, without  
him,  
The silk-worm now had spun our dreary  
shroud;—  
But he hath all dispers'd Death's tearful  
cloud,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

And Time's dread effigy scar'd quite away:  
Bow to him then, as though to me ye  
bow'd,  
And his dear wishes prosper and obey  
Wherever love and wit can find a way!

"'Noint him with fairy dews of magic  
savours,  
Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,  
Roses and spicy pinks,—and, of all favours,  
Plant in his walks the purple violet,  
And meadow-sweet under the hedges set,  
To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine  
And honeysuckles sweet,—nor yet forget  
Some pastoral flowery chaplets to entwine,  
To vie the thoughts about his brow benign!

"Let no wild things astonish him or fear  
him,  
But tell them all how mild he is of heart,  
Till e'en the timid hares go frankly near  
him,  
And eke the dappled does, yet never start;  
Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,  
Nor wrens forsake their nests among the  
leaves,  
Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart;—  
But bid the sacred swallow haunt his eaves,  
To guard his roof from lightning and from  
thieves.



## THE PLEA OF THE

“Or when he goes the nimble squirrel’s  
visitor,  
Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded  
nuts,  
For, tell him, this is Nature’s kind Inqui-  
sitor,—  
Though man keeps cautious doors that  
conscience shuts,  
For conscious wrong all curious quest  
rebut,—  
Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous  
stings,  
However he may watch their straw-built  
huts;—  
So let him learn the crafts of all small  
things,  
Which he will hint most aptly when he  
sings.”

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful  
hand  
Waves thrice three splendid circles round  
his head;  
Which, though deserted by the radiant  
wand,  
Wears still the glory which her waving  
shed,  
Such as erst crown’d the old Apostle’s head,  
To show the thoughts there harbour’d were  
divine,

## MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

And on immortal contemplations fed:—  
Goodly it was to see that glory shine  
Around a brow so lofty and benign!

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood  
Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,  
That had their mortal enemy withstood,  
And stay'd their lives, fast ebbing with the  
sand.

Long while this strife engag'd the pretty  
band;

But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to  
farm,

Challenged the dawn creeping o'er eastern  
land,

And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm,  
Which sounds the knell of every elfish  
charm.

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise  
From plashy mead and undiscover'd stream,  
Earth's morning incense to the early skies,  
Crept o'er the failing landscape of my  
dream.

Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme—  
A shapeless shade, that fancy disavow'd,  
And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme.  
Then flew Titania,—and her little crowd,  
Like flocking linnets, vanish'd in a cloud.

## Ode to Melancholy

Come, let us set our careful breasts,  
Like Philomel, against the thorn,  
To aggravate the inward grief,  
That makes her accents so forlorn;  
The world has many cruel points,  
Whereby our bosoms have been torn,  
And there are dainty themes of grief,  
In sadness to outlast the morn,—  
True honour's dearth, affection's death,  
Neglectful pride, and cankering scorn,  
With all the piteous tales that tears  
Have water'd since the world was born.

The world!—it is a wilderness,  
Where tears are hung on every tree;  
For thus my gloomy phantasy  
Makes all things weep with me!  
Come, let us sit and watch the sky,  
And fancy clouds, where no clouds be;  
Grief is enough to blot the eye,  
And make heav'n black with misery.  
Why should birds sing such merry notes,

## ODE TO MELANCHOLY

Unless they were more blest than we?  
No sorrow ever chokes their throats,  
Except sweet nightingale; for she  
Was born to pain our hearts the more  
With her sad melody.

Why shines the Sun except that he  
Makes gloomy nooks for Grief to hide,  
And pensive shades for Melancholy,  
When all the earth is bright beside?  
Let clay wear smiles, and green grass  
wave,

Mirth shall not win us back again,  
Whilst man is made of his own grave,  
And fairest clouds but gilded rain!

I saw my mother in her shroud,  
Her cheek was cold and very pale;  
And ever since I've looked on all  
As creatures doom'd to fail!  
Why do buds ope, except to die?  
Ay, let us watch the roses wither,  
And think of our loves' cheeks;  
And oh! how quickly time doth fly  
To bring death's winter hither!  
Minutes, hours, days, and weeks,  
Months, years, and ages shrink to nought;  
An age past is but a thought!

Ay, let us think of him a while,  
That, with a coffin for a boat,



*ODE TO MELANCHOLY*

Rows daily o'er the Stygian moat,  
And for our table choose a tomb:  
There's dark enough in any skull  
To charge with black a raven plume;  
And for the saddest funeral thoughts  
A winding sheet hath ample room,  
Where Death, with his keen-pointed style,  
Hath writ the common doom.  
How wide the yew-tree spreads its gloom,  
And o'er the dead lets fall its dew,  
As if in tears it wept for them,  
The many human families  
That sleep around its stem!

How cold the dead have made these stones,  
With natural drops kept ever wet!  
Lo! here the best, the worst, the world  
Doth now remember or forget,  
Are in one common ruin hurl'd,  
And love and hate are calmly met;  
The loveliest eyes that ever shone,  
The fairest hands, and locks of jet.  
Is't not enough to vex our souls,  
And fill our eyes, that we have set  
Our love upon a rose's leaf,  
Our hearts upon a violet?  
Blue eyes, red cheeks, are frailer yet;  
And, sometimes, at their swift decay  
Beforehand we must fret:  
The roses bud and bloom again;

## ODE TO MELANCHOLY

But Love may haunt the grave of Love,  
And watch the mould in vain.

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,  
And do not take my tears amiss;  
For tears must flow to wash away  
A thought that shows so stern as this:  
Forgive, if somewhere I forget,  
In woe to come, the present bliss.  
As frightened Proserpine let fall  
Her flowers at the sight of Dis,  
Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss,  
The sunniest things throw sternest shade,  
And there is ev'n a happiness  
That makes the heart afraid!

Now let us with a spell invoke  
The full-orb'd moon to grieve our eyes;  
Not bright, not bright, but, with a cloud  
Lapp'd all about her, let her rise  
All pale and dim, as if from rest  
The ghost of the late buried sun  
Had crept into the skies.  
The Moon! she is the source of sighs,  
The very face to make us sad;  
If but to think in other times  
The same calm quiet look she had,  
As if the world held nothing base,  
Of vile and mean, of fierce and bad;  
The same fair light that shone in streams.

## ODE TO MELANCHOLY

The fairy lamp that charm'd the lad;  
For so it is, with spent delights  
She taunts men's brains, and makes them  
mad.

All things are touch'd with Melancholy,  
Born of the secret soul's mistrust,  
To feel her fair ethereal wings  
Weigh'd down with vile degraded dust;  
Even the bright extremes of joy  
Bring on conclusions of disgust,  
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,  
Whose fragrance ends in must.  
O give her, then, her tribute just,  
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy;  
There is no music in the life  
That sounds with idiot laughter solely;  
There's not a string attun'd to mirth,  
But has its chord in Melancholy.

To a Child  
Embracing  
his Mother

Love thy Mother, little one!  
Kiss and clasp her neck again;  
Hereafter she may have a son  
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.  
Love thy Mother, little one!

Gaze upon her living eyes,  
And mirror back her love for thee;—  
Hereafter thou mayst shudder sighs  
To meet them when they cannot see.  
Gaze upon her living eyes!

Press her lips the while they glow  
With love that they have often told;—  
Hereafter thou mayst press in woe,  
And kiss them till thine own are cold.  
Press her lips the while they glow!



*TO A CHILD*

Oh! revere her raven hair!  
Although it be not silver-grey,  
Too early Death, led on by Care,  
May snatch, save one dear lock, away.  
Oh! revere her raven hair!

Pray for her at eve and morn,  
That Heaven may long the stroke defer:  
For thou mayst live the hour forlorn  
When thou wilt ask to die with her.  
Pray for her at eve and morn!

## To Jane

Welcome, dear Heart, and a most kind  
good-morrow;

The day is gloomy, but our looks shall  
shine:—

Flow'rs I have none to give thee, but I  
borrow

Their sweetness in a verse to speak of  
thine.

Here are red Roses, gathered at thy cheeks,—  
The white were all too happy to look  
white:

For love the Rose, for faith the Lily speaks;  
It withers in false hands, but here 'tis  
bright!

Dost love sweet Hyacinth? Its scented  
leaf

Curls manifold,—all love's delight blows  
double:

'Tis said this flow'ret is inscribed with  
grief,—

But let that hint of a forgotten trouble.

TO JANE

I plucked the Primrose at night's dewy  
noon;  
Like Hope, it showed its blossoms in the  
night;  
'T was, like Endymion, watching for the  
Moon!  
And here are Sunflowers, amorous of light!

These golden Buttercups are April's seal,—  
The Daisy stars her constellations be;  
These grew so lowly, I was forced to kneel,  
Therefore I pluck no Daisies but for thee!

Here's Daisies for the Morn, Primrose for  
gloom,  
Pansies and Roses for the noontide hours:—  
A wight once made a dial of their bloom,—  
So may thy life be measured out by flowers!

Ode to Rae  
Wilson, Esq.

"Close, close your eyes with holy dread,  
And weave a circle round him thrice;  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise."—*Coleridge.*

"It's very hard them kind of men  
Won't let a body be."—*Old Ballad.*

A wanderer, Wilson, from my native land,  
Remote, O Ray, from godliness and thee,  
Where rolls between us the eternal sea,  
Besides some furlongs of a foreign sand,—  
Beyond the broadest Scotch of London  
Wall;  
Beyond the loudest Saint that has a call;  
Across the wavy waste between us stretch'd,  
A friendly missive warns me of a stricture,  
Wherein my likeness you have darkly etch'd,  
And tho' I have not seen the shadow sketch'd,  
Thus I remark prophetic on the picture.

I guess the features:—in a line to paint  
Their moral ugliness, I'm not a saint.



*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ*

Not one of those self-constituted saints,  
Quacks—not physicians—in the cure of  
souls,

Censors who sniff out mortal taints,  
And call the devil over his own coals—  
Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God,  
Who write down judgments with a pen  
hard-nibb'd;

Ushers of Beelzebub's Black Rod,  
Commending sinners, not to ice thick-ribb'd,  
But endless flames, to scorch them up like  
flax,—

Yet sure of heav'n themselves, as if they'd  
cribb'd

Th' impression of St. Peter's keys in wax!

Of such a character no single trace  
Exists, I know, in my fictitious face;  
There wants a certain cast about the eye;  
A certain lifting of the nose's tip;  
A certain curling of the nether lip,  
In scorn of all that is, beneath the sky;  
In brief it is an aspect deleterious,  
A face decidedly not serious,  
A face profane, that would not do at all  
To make a face at Exeter Hall,—  
That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and  
pray,

And laud each other face to face,

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

Till ev'ry farthing-candle *ray*  
Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace!

Well!—be the graceless lineaments confest!  
I do enjoy this bounteous, beauteous earth;  
And dote upon a jest

“Within the limits of becoming mirth”;—  
No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,  
Nor think I'm pious when I'm only bilious—  
Nor study in my sanctum supercilious  
To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.  
I pray for grace—repent each sinful act—  
Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible;  
And love my neighbour, far too well, in  
fact,

To call and twit him with a godly tract  
That's turn'd by application to a libel.  
My heart ferments not with the bigot's  
leaven,

All creeds I view with toleration thorough,  
And have a horror of regarding heaven  
As anybody's rotten borough.

What else? no part I take in party fray,  
With tropes from Billingsgate's slang-  
whanging tartars,

I fear no Pope—and let great Ernest play  
At Fox and Goose with Foxe's Martyrs!  
I own I laugh at over-righteous men,

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

I own I shake my sides at ranters,  
And treat sham-Abr'am saints with wicked  
banters,  
I even own, that there are times—but then  
It's when I've got my wine—I say d——  
canters!

I've no ambition to enact the spy  
On fellow souls, a Spiritual Pry—  
'Tis said that people ought to guard their  
noses,  
Who thrust them into matters none of  
theirs;  
And tho' no delicacy discomposes  
Your Saint, yet I consider faith and pray'rs  
Amongst the privatest of men's affairs.

I do not hash the Gospel in my books,  
And thus upon the public mind intrude it,  
As if I thought, like Otaheitan cooks,  
No food was fit to eat till I had chew'd it.  
On Bible stilts I don't affect to stalk;  
Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk,—  
For man may pious texts repeat,  
And yet religion have no inward seat;  
'Tis not so plain as the old Hill of Howth,  
A man has got his bellyful of meat  
Because he talks with victuals in his mouth!

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

Mere verbiage,—it is not worth a carrot!  
Why, Socrates—or Plato—where's the  
odds?—

Once taught a jay to supplicate the Gods,  
And made a Polly-theist of a Parrot!

A mere professor, spite of all his cant, is  
Not a whit better than a Mantis,—  
An insect, of what clime I can't determine,  
That lifts its paws most parson-like, and  
thence,  
By simple savages—thro' sheer pretence—  
Is reckon'd quite a saint amongst the  
vermin.

But where's the reverence, or where the  
*nous*,  
To ride on one's religion thro' the lobby,  
Whether as stalking-horse or hobby,  
To show its pious paces to "the House"?

I honestly confess that I would hinder  
The Scottish member's legislative rigs,  
That spiritual Pindar,  
Who looks on erring souls as straying  
pigs,  
That must be lash'd by law, wherever  
found,  
And driv'n to church, as to the parish  
pound.



*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

I do confess, without reserve or wheedle,  
I view that grovelling idea as one  
Worthy some parish clerk's ambitious son,  
A charity-boy who longs to be a beadle.

On such a vital topic sure 'tis odd  
How much a man can differ from his  
neighbour:

One wishes worship freely giv'n to God,  
Another wants to make it statute-labour—  
The broad distinction in a line to draw,  
As means to lead us to the skies above,  
You say—Sir Andrew and his love of law,  
And I—the Saviour with his law of love.

Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,  
Like the magnetic needle to the Pole;  
But what were that intrinsic virtue worth,  
Suppose some fellow, with more zeal than  
knowledge,

Fresh from St. Andrew's college,  
Should nail the conscious needle to the  
north?

I do confess that I abhor and shrink  
From schemes, with a religious willy-nilly,  
That frown upon St. Giles's sins, but blink  
The peccadilloes of all Piccadilly—  
My soul revolts at such a bare hypocrisy,

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

And will not, dare not, fancy in accord  
The Lord of Hosts with an Exclusive Lord  
Of this world's aristocracy.

It will not own a notion so unholy,  
As thinking that the rich by easy trips  
May go to heav'n, whereas the poor and  
lowly

Must work their passage, as they do in  
ships.

One place there is—beneath the burial sod  
Where all mankind are equalized by death;  
Another place there is—the Fane of God,  
Where all are equal, who draw living  
breath;—

Juggle who well *elsewhere* with his own  
soul,

Playing the Judas with a temporal dole—  
He who can come beneath that awful cope,  
In the dread presence of a Maker just,  
Who metes to ev'ry pinch of human dust  
One even measure of immortal hope—  
He who can stand within that holy door,  
With soul unbow'd by that pure spirit-level,  
And frame unequal laws for rich and poor,—  
Might sit for Hell and represent the Devil!

Such are the solemn sentiments, O Rae,  
In your last Journey-Work, perchance, you  
ravage,

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

Seeming, but in more courtly terms, to say  
I'm but a heedless, creedless, godless  
savage;

A very Guy, deserving fire and faggots,—  
A Scoffer, always on the grin,  
And sadly given to the mortal sin  
Of liking Mawworms less than merry  
maggots!

The humble records of my life to search,  
I have not herded with mere pagan beasts;  
But sometimes I have "sat at good men's  
feasts",

And I have been "where bells have knoll'd  
to church".

Dear bells! how sweet the sounds of village  
bells

When on the undulating air they swim!  
Now loud as welcomes! faint, now, as  
farewells!

And trembling all about the breezy dells  
As flutter'd by the wings of Cherubim.  
Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low  
hymn;

And lost to sight th' ecstatic lark above  
Sings like a soul beatified, of love,—  
With, now and then, the coo of the wild  
pigeon;—

O Pagans, Heathens, Infidels, and Doubters!

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

If such sweet sounds can't woo you to  
religion,  
Will the harsh voices of church cads and  
touters?

A man may cry "Church! Church!" at  
ev'ry word,  
With no more piety than other people—  
A daw's not reckon'd a religious bird  
Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple.  
The Temple is a good, a holy place,  
But quacking only gives it an ill savour;  
While saintly mountebanks the porch dis-  
grace,  
And bring religion's self into disfavour!

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon  
Who, binding up his Bible with his Ledger  
Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon,  
A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,  
Who backs his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,  
Against the wicked remnant of the week,  
A saving bet against his sinful bias—  
"Rogue that I am," he whispers to himself,  
"I lie—I cheat—do anything for pelf,  
But who on earth can say I am not pious?"

In proof how over-righteousness re-acts,  
Accept an anecdote well bas'd on facts.



ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

One Sunday morning—(at the day don't  
fret)—

In riding with a friend to Ponder's End  
Outside the stage, we happen'd to commend  
A certain mansion that we saw To Let.

"Ay," cried our coachman, with our talk  
to grapple,

"You're right! no house along the road  
comes nigh it!

'Twas built by the same man as built yon  
chapel,

And master wanted once to buy it,—  
But t'other driv the bargain much too  
hard—

He ax'd sure-ly a sum purdigious!  
But being so particular religious,  
Why, *that*, you see, put master on his  
guard!"

Church is a "little heav'n below,  
I have been there and still would go,"—  
Yet I am none of those who think it odd  
A man can pray unbidden from the  
cassock,

And, passing by the customary hassock,  
Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,  
And sue *in formâ pauperis* to God.

As for the rest,—intolerant to none,  
Whatever shape the pious rite may bear,

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

Ev'n the poor Pagan's homage to the Sun  
I would not harshly scorn, lest even there  
I spurn'd some elements of Christian  
pray'r—

An aim, tho' erring, at a "world ayont"—  
Acknowledgment of good—of man's  
futility,

A sense of need, and weakness, and indeed  
That very thing so many Christians want—  
Humility.

Such, unto Papists, Jews, or turban'd  
Turks,

Such is my spirit—(I don't mean my wraith!)  
Such, may it please you, is my humble  
faith;

I know, full well, you do not like my  
*works!*

I have not sought, 't is true, the Holy Land,  
As full of texts as Cuddy Headrigg's mother,  
The Bible in one hand,  
And my own common-place-book in the  
other—

But you have been to Palestine—alas!  
Some minds improve by travel, others,  
rather,

Resemble copper wire, or brass,  
Which gets the narrower by the going  
farther!

Worthless are all such Pilgrimages—very!  
If Palmers at the Holy Tomb contrive

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

The human heats and rancour to revive  
That at the Sepulchre they ought to bury.  
A sorry sight it is to rest the eye on,  
To see a Christian creature graze at Sion,  
Then homeward, of the saintly pasture full,  
Rush bellowing, and breathing fire and  
    smoke,  
At crippled Papistry to butt and poke,  
Exactly as a skittish Scottish bull  
Hunts an old woman in a scarlet cloak!

Why leave a serious, moral, pious home,  
Scotland, renown'd for sanctity of old,  
Far distant Catholics to rate and scold  
For—doing as the Romans do at Rome?  
With such a bristling spirit wherefore quit  
The Land of Cakes for any land of wafers,  
About the graceless images to flit,  
And buzz and chafe importunate as chafers,  
Longing to carve the carvers to Scotch  
    collops?—

People who hold such absolute opinions  
Should stay at home, in Protestant do-  
    minions,  
Not travel like male Mrs. Trollopes.

Gifted with noble tendency to climb,  
Yet weak at the same time,  
Faith is a kind of parasitic plant,

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

That grasps the nearest stem with tendrils;  
And as the climate and the soil may grant,  
So is the sort of tree to which it clings.  
Consider then, before, like Hurllothrumbo,  
You aim your club at any creed on earth,  
That, by the simple accident of birth,  
*You* might have been High Priest to  
Mumbo Jumbo.

For me—thro' heathen ignorance perchance,  
Not having knelt in Palestine,—I feel  
None of that griffinish excess of zeal,  
Some travellers would blaze with here in  
France.

Dolls I can see in Virgin-like array,  
Nor for a scuffle with the idols hanker  
Like crazy Quixote at the puppet's play,  
If their "offence be rank", should mine  
be *rancour*?

Mild light, and by degrees, should be the  
plan

To cure the dark and erring mind;  
But who would rush at a benighted man,  
And give him two black eyes for being  
blind?

Suppose the tender but luxuriant hop  
Around a canker'd stem should twine,



ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

What Kentish boor would tear away the  
prop  
So roughly as to wound, nay, kill the  
bine?  
The images, 'tis true, are strangely  
dress'd,  
With gauds and toys extremely out of  
season;  
The carving nothing of the very best,  
The whole repugnant to the eye of reason,  
Shocking to Taste, and to Fine Arts a  
treason—  
Yet ne'er o'erlook in bigotry of sect  
One truly *Catholic*, one common form,  
At which uncheck'd  
All Christian hearts may kindle or keep  
warm.

Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,  
One bright and balmy morning, as I went  
From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,  
If hard by the wayside I found a cross,  
That made me breathe a pray'r upon the  
spot—  
While Nature of herself, as if to trace  
The emblem's use, had trail'd around its  
base  
The blue significant Forget-Me-Not?  
Methought, the claims of Charity to urge  
More forcibly, along with Faith and Hope,

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

The pious choice had pitch'd upon the  
verge

Of a delicious slope,

Giving the eye much variegated scope;—

"Look round," it whispered, "on that  
prospect rare,

Those vales so verdant, and those hills so  
blue;

Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh, and fair,  
But"—(how the simple legend pierc'd me  
thro'!)

"PRIEZ POUR LES MALHEUREUX".

With sweet kind natures, as in honey'd  
cells,

Religion lives, and feels herself at home;

But only on a formal visit dwells

Where wasps instead of bees have form'd  
the comb.

Shun pride, O Rae!—whatever sort beside  
You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride!

A pride there is of rank—a pride of birth,

A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,

A London pride—in short, there be on  
earth

A host of prides, some better and some  
worse;

But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaind,

The proudest swells a self-elected Saint.

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

To picture that cold pride so harsh and  
hard,

Fancy a peacock in a poultry yard.  
Behold him in conceited circles sail,  
Strutting and dancing, and now planted  
stiff,

In all his pomp of pageantry as if  
He felt "the eyes of Europe" on his tail!  
As for the humble breed retain'd by man,  
He scorns the whole domestic clan—  
He bows, he bridles,  
He wheels, he sidles,

At last, with stately dodgings, in a corner  
He pens a simple russet hen, to scorn her  
Full in the blaze of his resplendent fan!

"Look here," he cries (to give him  
words),

"Thou feather'd clay—thou scum of  
birds!"

Flirting the rustling plumage in her  
eyes,—

"Look here, thou vile predestin'd sinner,  
Doom'd to be roasted for a dinner,  
Behold these lovely variegated dyes!  
These are the rainbow colours of the skies,  
That Heav'n has shed upon me *con amore*—  
A Bird of Paradise?—a pretty story!

I am that Saintly Fowl, thou paltry chick!

Look at my crown of glory!  
Thou dingy, dirty, drabbed, draggled jill!"

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

And off goes Partlet, wriggling from a  
kick,  
With bleeding scalp laid open by his bill!  
That little simile exactly paints  
How sinners are despis'd by saints.  
By saints!—the Hypocrites that ope heav'n's  
door  
Obsequious to the sinful man of riches—  
But put the wicked, naked, barelegg'd poor  
In parish stocks instead of breeches.

The Saints!—the Bigots that in public  
spout,  
Spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of  
fustian,  
And go like walking "Lucifers" about,  
Mere living bundles of combustion.

The Saints!—the aping Fanatics that talk  
All cant and rant, and rhapsodies high-  
flown—  
That bid you baulk  
A Sunday walk,  
And shun God's work as you should shun  
your own.

The Saints!—the Formalists, the extra  
pious,  
Who think the mortal husk can save the  
soul,



ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ

By trundling with a mere mechanic bias,  
To church, just like a lignum-vitæ bowl!

The Saints!—the Pharisees, whose beadle  
stands

Beside a stern coercive kirk.

A piece of human mason-work,  
Calling all sermons contrabands,  
In that great Temple that's not made with  
hands!

Thrice blessed, rather, is the man, with  
whom

The gracious prodigality of nature,  
The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the  
bloom,

The bounteous providence in ev'ry feature,  
Recall the good Creator to his creature,  
Making all earth a fane, all heav'n its  
dome!

To *his* tun'd spirit the wild heather-bells

Ring Sabbath knells;

The jubilate of the soaring lark

Is chaunt of clerk;

For choir, the thrush and the gregarious  
linnet;

The sod's a cushion for his pious want;  
And, consecrated by the heav'n within it,

The sky-blue pool, a font.

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

Each cloud-capp'd mountain is a holy altar;  
An organ breathes in every grove;  
And the full heart's a Psalter,  
Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love!

Sufficiently 'by stern necessitarians  
Poor Nature, with her face begrim'd by  
dust,  
Is stoked, coked, smoked, and almost  
choked; but must  
Religion have its own Utilitarians,  
Labell'd with evangelical phylacteries,  
To make the road to heav'n a railway  
trust,  
And churches—that 's the naked fact—mere  
factories?

Oh! simply open wide the Temple door,  
And let the solemn, swelling, organ greet,  
With *Voluntaries* meet,  
The *willing* advent of the rich and poor!  
And while to God the loud Hosannas soar,  
With rich vibrations from the vocal  
throng—  
From quiet shades that to the woods be-  
long,  
And brooks with music of their own,  
Voices may come to swell the choral song  
With notes of praise they learn'd in mus-  
ings lone.

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

How strange it is while on all vital questions,

That occupy the House and public mind,  
We always meet with some humane suggestions

Of gentle measures of a healing kind,  
Instead of harsh severity and vigour,  
The Saint alone his preference retains

For bills of penalties and pains,  
And marks his narrow code with legal rigour!

Why shun, as worthless of affiliation,  
What men of all political persuasion  
Extol—and even use upon occasion—

That Christian principle, Conciliation?  
But possibly the men who make such fuss  
With Sunday pippins and old Trots infirm,  
Attach some other meaning to the term,

As thus:

One market morning, in my usual rambles,  
Passing along Whitechapel's ancient shambles,

Where meat was hung in many a joint  
and quarter,

I had to halt awhile, like other folks,  
To let a killing butcher coax

A score of lambs and fatted sheep to  
slaughter.

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

A sturdy man he look'd to fell an ox,  
Bull-fronted, ruddy, with a formal streak  
Of well-greas'd hair down either cheek,  
As if he dee-dash-dee'd some other flocks  
Beside those woolly-headed stubborn blocks  
That stood before him, in vexatious huddle—  
Poor little lambs, with bleating wethers  
group'd,

While, now and then, a thirsty creature  
stoop'd  
And meekly snuff'd, but did not taste the  
puddle.

Fierce bark'd the dog, and many a blow  
was dealt,  
That loin, and chump, and scrag, and  
saddle felt,  
Yet still, that fatal step they all declin'd  
it,—  
And shunn'd the tainted door as if they  
smelt  
Onions, mint sauce, and lemon juice be-  
hind it.

At last there came a pause of brutal force,  
The cur was silent, for his jaws were full  
Of tangled locks of tarry wool,  
The man had whoop'd and bellow'd till  
dead hoarse.  
The time was ripe for mild expostulation,



ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

And thus it stammer'd from a stander-by—  
“Zounds!—my good fellow,—it quite  
makes me—why,  
It really—my dear fellow—do just try  
Conciliation!”

Stringing his nerves like flint,  
The sturdy butcher seized upon the hint,—  
At least he seized upon the foremost  
wether,—  
And hugg'd and lugg'd and tugg'd him  
neck and crop  
Just *volens volens* thro' the open shop—  
If tails come off he didn't care a feather,—  
Then walking to the door and smiling  
grim,  
He rubb'd his forehead and his sleeve to-  
gether—  
“There!—I have *conciliated* him!”

Again—good-humouredly to end our  
quarrel—  
(Good humour should prevail!)  
I'll fit you with a tale,  
Whereto is tied a moral.

Once on a time a certain English lass  
Was seized with symptoms of such deep  
decline,  
Cough, hectic flushes, ev'ry evil sign,

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

That, as their wont is at such desperate  
pass,  
The Doctors gave her over—to an ass.

Accordingly, the grisly Shade to bilk,  
Each morn the patient quaff'd a frothy  
bowl

Of asinine new milk,  
Robbing a shaggy suckling of a foal  
Which got proportionately spare and  
skinny—

Meanwhile the neighbours cried “poor  
Mary Ann!

She can't get over it! she never can!”  
When lo! to prove each prophet was a  
ninny

The one that died was the poor wet-nurse  
Jenny.

To aggravate the case,  
There were but two grown donkeys in the  
place;

And most unluckily for Eve's sick daughter,  
The other long-ear'd creature was a male,  
Who never in his life had given a pail

Of milk, or even chalk and water.  
No matter: at the usual hour of eight  
Down trots a donkey to the wicket-gate,  
With Mister Simon Gubbins on its back,—

*ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.*

"Your sarvant, Miss,—a werry spring-like  
day,—  
Bad time for hasses tho'! good lack! good  
lack!  
Jenny be dead, Miss,—but I 'ze brought ye  
Jack,  
He doesn't give no milk—but he can bray."

So runs the story,  
And, in vain self-glory,  
Some Saints would sneer at Gubbins for  
his blindness—  
But what the better are their pious saws  
To ailing souls, than dry hee-haws,  
Without the milk of human kindness?

## To My Daughter

ON HER BIRTHDAY

Dear Fanny! nine long years ago,  
While yet the morning sun was low  
And rosy with the eastern glow  
The landscape smiled—  
Whilst low'd the newly-waken'd herds—  
Sweet as the early song of birds,  
I heard those first, delightful words,  
"Thou hast a Child!"

Along with that uprising dew  
Tears glisten'd in my eyes, though few,  
To hail a dawning quite as new  
To me, as Time:  
It was not sorrow—not annoy—  
But like a happy maid, though coy,  
With grief-like welcome even Joy  
Forestalls its prime.



*TO MY DAUGHTER*

So mayst thou live, dear! many years,  
In all the bliss that life endears,  
Not without smiles, nor yet from tears

Too strictly kept:

When first thy infant littleness  
I folded in my fond caress,  
The greatest proof of happiness  
Was this—I wept.

## The Pauper's Christmas Carol

Full of drink and full of meat,  
On our SAVIOUR's natal day,  
CHARITY's perennial treat;  
Thus I heard a Pauper say:—  
"Ought not I to dance and sing  
Thus supplied with famous cheer?

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year!

"After labour's long turmoil,  
Sorry fare and frequent fast,  
Two-and-fifty weeks of toil,  
Pudding-time is come at last!  
But are raisins high or low,  
Flour and suet cheap or dear?

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year.

*PAUPER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL*

"Fed upon the coarsest fare  
Three hundred days and sixty-four  
But for *one* on viands rare,  
Just as if I wasn't poor!  
Ought not I to bless my stars,  
Warden, clerk, and overseer?

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year.

"Treated like a welcome guest,  
One of Nature's social chain,  
Seated, tended on, and press'd—  
But when shall I be press'd again,  
Twice to pudding, thrice to beef,  
A dozen times to ale and beer?

Heigho!

I hardly know,

Christmas comes but once a year.

"Come to-morrow how it will;  
Diet scant and usage rough,  
Hunger once has had its fill,  
Thirst for once has had enough,  
But shall I ever dine again?  
Or see another feast appear?

Heigho!

I only know

Christmas comes but once a year.

*PAUPER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL*

"Frozen cares begin to melt,  
Hopes revive and spirits flow—  
Feeling as I have not felt  
Since a dozen months ago—  
Glad enough to sing a song—  
To-morrow shall I volunteer?

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year.

"Bright and blessed is the time,  
Sorrows end and joys begin,  
While the bells with merry chime  
Ring the Day of Plenty in!  
But the happy tide to hail,  
With a sigh or with a tear,

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year!"



The Dream of  
Eugene Aram,  
the Murderer

'T was in the prime of summer time,  
An evening calm and cool,  
And four-and-twenty happy boys  
Came bounding out of school:  
There were some that ran and some that  
leapt,  
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds,  
And souls untouched by sin;  
To a level mead they came, and there  
They drave the wickets in:  
Pleasantly shone the setting sun  
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they cours'd about,  
And shouted as they ran,—  
Turning to mirth all things of earth,  
As only boyhood can;  
But the Usher sat remote from all,  
A melancholy man!

*DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM*

His hat was off, his vest apart,  
To catch heaven's blessed breeze;  
For a burning thought was in his brow,  
And his bosom ill at ease:  
So he lean'd his head on his hands, and  
read  
The book between his knees!

Leaf after leaf, he turn'd it o'er,  
Nor ever glanc'd aside,  
For the peace of his soul he read that book  
In the golden eventide:  
Much study had made him very lean,  
And pale, and leaden-ey'd.

At last he shut the ponderous tome,  
With a fast and fervent grasp  
He strain'd the dusky covers close,  
And fixed the brazen hasp:  
"Oh, God! could I so close my mind,  
And clasp it with a clasp!"

Then leaping on his feet upright,  
Some moody turns he took,—  
Now up the mead, then down the mead,  
And past a shady nook,—  
And, lo! he saw a little boy  
That pored upon a book!

DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM

"My gentle lad, what is't you read—  
Romance or fairy fable?  
Or is it some historic page,  
Of kings and crowns unstable?"  
The young boy gave an upward glance,—  
"It is *The Death of Abel*."

The Usher took six hasty strides,  
As smit with sudden pain,—  
Six hasty strides beyond the place,  
Then slowly back again;  
And down he sat beside the lad,  
And talk'd with him of Cain;

And, long since then, of bloody men,  
Whose deeds tradition saves;  
Of lonely folk cut off unseen,  
And hid in sudden graves;  
Of horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,  
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injur'd men  
Shriek upward from the sod,—  
Ay, how the ghostly hand will point  
To show the burial clod;  
And unknown facts of guilty acts  
Are seen in dreams from God!

He told how murderers walk the earth  
Beneath the curse of Cain,—

## *DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM*

With crimson clouds before their eyes,  
And flames about their brain:  
For blood has left upon their souls  
Its everlasting stain!

"And well," quoth he, "I know, for truth,  
Their pangs must be extreme,—  
Woe, woe, unutterable woe,—  
Who spill life's sacred stream!  
For why? Methought, last night, I wrought  
A murder, in a dream!

"One that had never done me wrong—  
A feeble man, and old;  
I led him to a lonely field,—  
The moon shone clear and cold:  
Now here, said I, this man shall die,  
And I will have his gold!

"Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,  
And one with a heavy stone,  
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,—  
And then the deed was done:  
There was nothing lying at my foot  
But lifeless flesh and bone!

"Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,  
That could not do me ill;  
And yet I fear'd him all the more,  
For lying there so still:



*DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM*

There was a manhood in his look,  
That murder could not kill!

"And, lo! the universal air  
Seem'd lit with ghastly flame;—  
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes  
Were looking down in blame:  
I took the dead man by his hand,  
And call'd upon his name!

"Oh, God! it made me quake to see  
Such sense within the slain!  
But when I touch'd the lifeless clay,  
The blood gushed out amain!  
For every clot, a burning spot  
Was scorching in my brain!

"My head was like an ardent coal,  
My heart as solid ice;  
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,  
Was at the Devil's price:  
A dozen times I groan'd; the dead  
Had never groan'd but twice!

"And now, from forth the frowning sky,  
From the Heaven's topmost height,  
I heard a voice—the awful voice  
Of the blood-avenging Sprite:—  
'Thou guilty man! take up thy dead  
, And hide it from my sight!'

*DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM*

"I took the dreary body up,  
And cast it in a stream,—  
A sluggish water, black as ink,  
The depth was so extreme:—  
My gentle Boy, remember this  
Is nothing but a dream!

"Down went the corse with a hollow plunge  
And vanish'd in the pool;  
Anon I cleans'd my bloody hands,  
And wash'd my forehead cool,  
And sat among the urchins young,  
That evening in the school.

"Oh, Heaven! to think of their white souls,  
And mine so black and grim!  
I could not share in childish prayer,  
Nor join in Evening Hymn:  
Like a Devil of the Pit I seem'd,  
'Mid holy Cherubim!

"And Peace went with them, one and all,  
And each calm pillow spread;  
But Guilt was my grim Chamberlain  
That lighted me to bed;  
And drew my midnight curtains round  
With fingers bloody red!

"All night I lay in agony,  
In anguish dark and deep;

*DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM*

My fever'd eyes I dared not close,  
But stared aghast at Sleep:  
For Sin had render'd unto her  
The keys of Hell to keep!

"All night I lay in agony,  
From weary chime to chime,  
With one besetting horrid hint,  
That rack'd me all the time;  
A mighty yearning, like the first  
Fierce impulse unto crime!

"One stern tyrannic thought, that made  
All other thoughts its slave;  
Stronger and stronger every pulse  
Did that temptation crave,—  
Still urging me to go and see  
The Dead Man in his grave!

"Heavily I rose up, as soon  
As light was in the sky,  
And sought the black accursed pool  
With a wild misgiving eye;  
And I saw the Dead in the river bed,  
For the faithless stream was dry!

"Merrily rose the lark, and shook  
The dewdrop from its wing;  
But I never mark'd its morning flight,  
I never heard it sing:

*DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM*

For I was stooping once again  
Under the horrid thing.

“With breathless speed, like a soul in  
chase,  
I took him up and ran;—  
There was no time to dig a grave  
Before the day began:  
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,  
I hid the murder’d man!

‘And all that day I read in school,  
But my thought was other where;  
As soon as the mid-day task was done,  
In secret I was there:  
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,  
And still the corse was bare!

“Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep:  
Or land, or sea, though he should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

“So wills the fierce avenging Sprite,  
Till blood for blood atones!  
Ay, though he’s buried in a cave,  
And trodden down with stones,



*DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM*

And years have rotted off his flesh,—  
The world shall see his bones!

“Oh, God! that horrid, horrid dream  
Besets me now awake!  
Again—again, with a dizzy brain,  
The human life I take;  
And my red right hand grows raging hot,  
Like Cranmer's at the stake.

“And still no peace for the restless clay,  
Will wave or mould allow;  
The horrid thing pursues my soul,—  
It stands before me now!”  
The fearful Boy look'd up, and saw  
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle sleep  
The urchin's eyelids kiss'd,  
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,  
Through the cold and heavy mist;  
And Eugene Aram walked between,  
With gyves upon his wrist.

## The Lady's Dream

The lady lay in her bed,  
Her couch so warm and soft,  
But her sleep' was restless and broken  
still;  
For turning oft and oft  
From side to side, she mutter'd and  
moan'd,  
And toss'd her arms aloft.

At last she startled up,  
And gaz'd on the vacant air,  
With a look of awe, as if she saw  
Some dreadful phantom there—  
And then in the pillow she buried her face  
From visions ill to bear.

The very curtain shook,  
Her terror was so extreme;  
And the light that fell on the broider'd  
quilt  
Kept a tremulous gleam;

## *THE LADY'S DREAM*

And her voice was hollow, and shook as  
she cried:—

“Oh me! that awful dream!

“That weary, weary walk,  
In the churchyard's dismal ground!  
And those horrible things, with shady  
wings,  
That came and flitted round,—  
Death, death, and nothing but death,  
In every sight and sound!

“And oh! those maidens young,  
Who wrought in that dreary room,  
With figures drooping and spectres thin,  
And cheeks without a bloom;—  
And the Voice that cried, ‘For the pomp  
of Pride,  
We haste to an early tomb!

“‘For the pomp and pleasure of Pride,  
We toil like Afric slaves,  
And only to earn a home at last,  
Where yonder cypress waves;’—  
And then they pointed—I never saw  
A ground so full of graves!

“And still the coffins came,  
With their sorrowful trains and slow;

## *THE LADY'S DREAM*

Coffin after coffin still,  
A sad and sickening show;  
From grief exempt, I never had dreamt  
Of such a World of Woe!

“Of the hearts that daily break,  
Of the tears that hourly fall,  
Of the many, many troubles of life,  
That grieve this earthly ball—  
Disease, and Hunger, and Pain, and Want,  
But now I dreamt of them all!

“For the blind and the cripple were there,  
And the babe that pined for bread,  
And the houseless man, and the widow  
poor  
Who begged—to bury the dead;  
The naked, alas, that I might have clad,  
The famished I might have fed!

“The sorrow I might have soothed,  
And the unregarded tears;  
For many a thronging shape was there,  
From long-forgotten years,  
Ay, even the poor rejected Moor,  
Who rais'd my childish fears!

“Each pleading look, that long ago  
I scann'd with a heedless eye,



## *THE LADY'S DREAM*

Each face was gazing as plainly there,  
As when I pass'd it by:  
Woe, woe for me if the past should be  
Thus present when I die!

"No need of sulphurous lake,  
No need of fiery coal,  
But only that crowd of human kind  
Who wanted pity and dole—  
In everlasting retrospect—  
Will wring my sinful soul!

"Alas! I have walked through life  
Too heedless where I trod;  
Nay, helping to trample my fellow worm,  
And fill the burial sod—  
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls  
Not unmark'd of God!

"I drank the richest draughts;  
And ate whatever is good—  
Fish, and flesh, and fowl, and fruit,  
Supplied my hungry mood;  
But I never remembered the wretched ones  
That starve for want of food!

"I dress'd as the noble dress,  
In cloth of silver and gold,

### *THE LADY'S DREAM*

With silk, and satin, and costly furs,  
In many an ample fold;  
But I never remember'd the naked limb  
That froze with winter's cold.

"The wounds I might have heal'd!  
The human sorrow and smart!  
And yet it never was in my soul  
To play so ill a part:  
But evil is wrought by want of Thought,  
As well as want of Heart!"

She clasp'd her fervent hands,  
And the tears began to stream;  
Large, and bitter, and fast they fell,  
Remorse was so extreme:  
And yet, oh yet, that many a Dame  
Would dream the Lady's Dream!

## The Work- house Clock

AN ALLEGORY

There's a murmur in the air,  
And noise in every street—  
The murmur of many tongues,  
The noise of numerous feet—  
While round the Workhouse door  
The Labouring Classes flock,  
For why? the Overseer of the Poor  
Is setting the Workhouse Clock.

Who does not hear the tramp  
Of thousands speeding along,  
Of either sex and various stamp,  
Sickly, crippled, or strong,  
Walking, limping, creeping  
From court, and alley, and lane,  
But all in one direction sweeping  
Like rivers that seek the main?

Who does not see them sally  
From mill, and garret, and room,

## THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK

In lane, and court, and alley,  
From homes in poverty's lowest valley,  
Furnished with shuttle and loom—  
Poor slaves of Civilization's galley—  
And in the road and footways rally,  
As if for the Day of Doom?

Some, of hardly human form,  
Stunted, crooked, and crippled by toil;  
Dingy with smoke and dust and oil,  
And smirch'd besides with vicious soil,  
Clustering, mustering, all in a swarm.  
Father, mother, and careful child,  
Looking as if it had never smiled—  
The Sempstress, lean, and weary, and  
wan,

With only the ghosts of garments on—  
The Weaver, her fallow neighbour,  
The grim and sooty Artisan;  
Every soul—child, woman, or man,  
Who lives—or dies—by labour.

Stirr'd by an overwhelming zeal,  
And social impulse, a terrible throng!  
Leaving shuttle, and needle, and wheel,  
Furnace, and grindstone, spindle, and reel,  
Thread, and yarn, and iron, and steel—  
Yea, rest and the yet untasted meal—  
Gushing, rushing, crushing along,  
A very torrent of Man!



## *THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK*

Urged by the sighs of sorrow and wrong,  
Grown at last to a hurricane strong,  
Stop its course who can!  
Stop who can its onward course  
And irresistible moral force;  
O! vain and idle dream!  
For surely as men are all akin,  
Whether of fair or sable skin,  
According to Nature's scheme,  
That Human Movement contains within  
A Blood-Power stronger than Steam.

Onward, onward, with hasty feet,  
They swarm—and westward still—  
Masses born to drink and eat,  
But starving amidst Whitechapel's meat,  
And famishing down Cornhill!  
Through the Poultry—but still unfed—  
Christian Charity, hang your head!  
Hungry—passing the Street of Bread;  
Thirsty—the street of Milk;  
Ragged—beside the Ludgate Mart,  
So gorgeous, through Mechanic Art,  
With cotton, and wool, and silk!

At last, before that door  
That bears so many a knock  
Ere ever it opens to Sick or Poor,  
Like sheep they huddle and flock—

*THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK* •

And would that all the Good and Wise  
Could see the million of hollow eyes,  
With a gleam deriv'd from Hope and the  
skies,  
Upturn'd to the Workhouse Clock!

Oh! that the Parish Powers,  
Who regulate Labour's hours,  
The daily amount of human trial,  
Weariness, pain, and self-denial,  
Would turn from the artificial dial  
That striketh ten or eleven,  
And go, for once, by that older one . . .  
That stands in the light of Nature's sun,  
And takes its time from Heaven!

The Bridge  
of Sighs

"Drown'd! drown'd!"—*Hamlet.*

One more Unfortunate,  
Weary of breath,  
Rashly importunate,  
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care;  
Fashion'd so slenderly,  
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments  
Clinging like cerements;  
Whilst the wave constantly  
Drips from her clothing;  
Take her up instantly,  
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;  
Think of her mournfully,

*THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS*

Gently and humanly;  
Not of the stains of her,  
All that remains of her  
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny  
Into her mutiny  
Rash and undutiful:  
Past all dishonour,  
Death has left on her  
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,  
One of Eve's family—  
Wipe those poor lips of hers  
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses  
Escaped from the comb,  
Her fair auburn tresses;  
Whilst wonderment guesses  
Where was her home?

Who was her father?  
Who was her mother?  
Had she a sister?  
Had she a brother?  
Or was there a dearer one  
Still, and a nearer one  
Yet, than all other?



## *THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS*

Alas! for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
Under the sun!  
Oh! it was pitiful!  
Near a whole city full,  
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,  
Fatherly, motherly  
Feelings had changed:  
Love, by harsh evidence,  
Thrown from its eminence;  
Even God's providence  
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver  
So far in the river,  
With many a light  
From window and casement,  
From garret to basement,  
She stood, with amazement,  
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March  
Made her tremble and shiver;  
But not the dark arch,  
Or the black flowing river:  
Mad from life's history,  
Glad to death's mystery,  
Swift to be hurl'd—

## *THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS*

Anywhere, anywhere  
Out of the world!

In she plung'd boldly,  
No matter how coldly  
The rough river ran,—  
Over the brink of it,  
Picture it—think of it,  
Dissolute man!  
Lave in it, drink of it,  
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care;  
Fashion'd so slenderly,  
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly  
Stiffen too rigidly,  
Decently,—kindly,—  
Smoothe and compose them:  
And her eyes, close them,  
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring  
Thro' muddy impurity,  
As when with the daring  
Last look of despairing  
Fix'd on futurity.

*THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS*

Perishing gloomily,  
Spurr'd by contumely,  
Cold inhumanity,  
Burning insanity,  
Into her rest.—  
Cross her hands humbly,  
As if praying dumbly,  
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,  
Her evil behaviour,  
And leaving, with meekness,  
Her sins to her Saviour!

## The Death-bed

We watch'd her breathing thro' the night,  
Her breathing soft and low,  
As in her breast the wave of life  
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,  
So slowly moved about,  
As we had lent her half our powers  
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,  
Our fears our hopes belied—  
We thought her dying when she slept,  
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad,  
And chill with early showers,  
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had  
Another morn than ours.



## The Lay of the Labourer

A spade! a rake! a hoe!  
A pickaxe, or a bill!  
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,  
A flail, or what ye will—  
And here's a ready hand  
To ply the needful tool,  
And skill'd enough, by lessons rough,  
In Labour's rugged school.

To hedge, or dig the ditch,  
To lop or fell the tree,  
To lay the swarth on the sultry field,  
Or plough the stubborn lea;  
The harvest stack to bind,  
The wheaten rick to thatch,  
And never fear in my pouch to find  
The tinder or the match.

To a flaming barn or farm  
My fancies never roam;  
The fire I yearn to kindle and burn  
Is on the hearth of Home;

## *THE LAY OF THE LABOURER*

Where children huddle and crouch  
Through dark long winter days,  
Where starving children huddle and crouch;  
To see the cheerful rays,  
A-glowing on the haggard cheek,  
And not in the haggard's blaze!

To Him who sends a drought  
To parch the fields forlorn,  
The rain to flood the meadows with mud,  
The lights to blast the corn,  
To Him I leave to guide  
The bolt in its crooked path,  
To strike the miser's rick, and show  
The skies blood-red with wrath.

A spade! a rake! a hoe!  
A pickaxe, or a bill!  
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,  
A flail, or what ye will—  
The corn to thrash, or the hedge to splash,  
The market-team to drive,  
Or mend the fence by the cover side,  
And leave the game alive.

Ay, only give me work,  
And then you need not fear  
That I shall snare his worship's hare,  
Or kill his grace's deer;

## *THE LAY OF THE LABOURER*

Break into his lordship's house,  
To steal the plate so rich;  
Or leave the yeoman that had a purse  
To welter in a ditch.

Wherever Nature needs,  
Wherever labour calls,  
No job I'll shirk of the hardest work,  
To shun the workhouse walls;  
Where savage laws begrudge  
The pauper babe its breath,  
And doom a wife to a widow's life,  
Before her partner's death.

My only claim is this,  
With labour stiff and stark,  
By lawful turn, my living to earn,  
Between the light and dark;  
My daily bread, and nightly bed,  
My bacon, and drop of beer—  
But all from the hand that holds the land,  
And none from the overseer!

No parish money, or loaf,  
No pauper badges for me,  
A son of the soil, by right of toil  
Entitled to my fee.  
No alms I ask, give me my task:  
Here are the arm, the leg,

## *THE LAY OF THE LABOURER*

The strength, the sinews of a Man,  
To work, and not to beg.

Still one of Adam's heirs,  
Though doom'd by chance of birth  
To dress so mean, and to eat the lean  
Instead of the fat of the earth;  
To make such humble meals  
As honest labour can,  
A bone and a crust, with a grace to God,  
And little thanks to man!

A spade! a rake! a hoe!  
A pickaxe, or a bill!  
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,  
A flail, or what ye will—  
Whatever the tool to ply,  
Here is a willing drudge,  
With muscle and limb, and woe to him  
Who does their pay begrudge!

Who every weekly score  
Docks labour's little mite,  
Bestows on the poor at the temple door,  
But robb'd them over night.  
The very shilling he hoped to save,  
As health and morals fail,  
Shall visit me in the New Bastille,  
The Spital, or the Gaol!



Ode to Joseph  
Grimaldi, Senior

"This fellow's wise enough to play the fool,  
And to do that well craves a kind of wit."

—*Twelfth Night.*

Joseph! they say thou 'st left the stage,  
To toddle down the hill of life,  
And taste the flannelled ease of age,  
Apart from pantomimic strife—  
"Retired—(for Young would call it so)—  
The world shut out"—in Pleasant row!

And hast thou really washed at last  
From each white cheek the red half-moon?  
And all thy public clownship cast,  
To play the private pantaloon?  
All youth—all ages—yet to be,  
Shall have a heavy miss of thee!

Thou didst not preach to make us wise—  
Thou hadst no finger in our schooling—  
Thou didst not "lure us to the skies"—  
Thy simple, simple trade was—Fooling!

ODE TO JOSEPH GRIMALDI

And yet, Heaven knows! we could—we can  
Much “better spare a better man!”

Oh, had it pleased the gout to take  
The reverend Croly from the stage,  
Or Southey, for our quiet's sake,  
Or Mr. Fletcher, Cupid's sage,  
Or, d——e! namby-pamby Poole—  
Or any other clown or fool!

Go, Dibdin—all that bear the name,  
Go, Byway Highway man! go! go!  
Go, Skeffy—man of painted fame,  
But leave thy partner, painted Joe!  
I could bear Kirby on the wane,  
Or Signor Paulo with a sprain!

Had Joseph Wilfrid Parkins made  
His grey hair scarce in private peace—  
Had Waithman sought a rural shade—  
Or Cobbett ta'en a turnpike lease—  
Or Lisle Bowles gone to *Balaam* Hill—  
I think I could be cheerful still!

Had Medwin left off, to his praise,  
Dead lion kicking, like—a friend!—  
Had long, long Irving gone his ways,  
To muse on death at *Ponder's End*—  
Or Lady Morgan taken leave  
Of letters—still I might not grieve!

ODE TO JOSEPH GRIMALDI

But Joseph—everybody's Joe!—

Is gone—and grieve I will and must!  
As Hamlet did for Yorick, so

Will I for thee (tho' not yet dust),  
And talk as he did when he missed  
The kissing-crust that he had kissed!

Ah, where is now thy rolling head!

Thy winking, reeling, *drunken* eyes,  
(As old Catullus would have said,)

Thy oven-mouth, that swallowed pies—  
Enormous hunger—monstrous drouth!  
Thy pockets greedy as thy mouth!

Ah, where thy ears, so often cuffed!—

Thy funny, flapping, filching hands!—  
Thy partridge body, always stuffed

With waifs and strays, and contrabands!—  
Thy foot—like Berkeley's *Footie*—for why?  
'Twas often made to wipe an eye!

Ah, where thy legs—that witty pair—

For “great wits jump”—and so did  
they!

Lord! how they leaped in lamp-light air!

Capered—and bounced—and strode  
away!—

That years should tame the legs—alack!  
I've seen spring thro' an Almanack!

ODE TO JOSEPH GRIMALDI

But bounds will have their bound—the  
shocks

Of Time will cramp the nimblest toes;  
And those that frisked in silken clocks  
May look to limp in fleecy hose—  
One only (champion of the ring)  
Could ever make his Winter,—Spring!

And gout, that owns no odds between  
The toe of Czar and toe of Clown,  
Will visit—but I did not mean  
To moralize, though I am grown  
Thus sad.—Thy going seemed to beat  
A muffled drum for Fun's retreat!

And, may be—'tis no time to smother  
A sigh, when two prime wags of London,  
Are gone—thou, Joseph, one—the other,  
A Joe!—"sic transit gloria *Munden!*"  
A third departure some insist on—  
Stage-apoplexy threatens Liston!—

Nay, then, let Sleeping Beauty sleep  
With ancient "*Dozey*" to the dregs—  
Let Mother Goose wear mourning deep,  
And put a hatchment o'er her eggs!  
Let Farly weep—for Magic's man  
Is gone—his Christmas Caliban!



## ODE TO JOSEPH GRIMALDI

Let Kemble, Forbes, and Willet rain,  
As though they walked behind thy bier,—  
For since thou wilt not play again,  
What matters,—if in heav'n or here!  
Or in thy grave, or in thy bed!—  
There's Quick might just as well be dead!

Oh, how will thy departure cloud  
The lamp-light of the little breast!  
The Christmas child will grieve aloud  
To miss his broadest friend and best,—  
Poor urchin! what avails to him  
The cold New Monthly's *Ghost of Grimm*?

For who like thee could ever stride!  
Some dozen paces to the mile!—  
The motley, medley coach provide—  
Or like Joe Frankenstein compile  
The *vegetable man* complete!—  
A proper *Covent Garden* feat!

Oh, who like thee could ever drink,  
Or eat, swill, swallow, bolt, and choke!  
Nod, weep, and hiccup—sneeze and wink?—  
Thy very yawn was quite a joke!  
Tho' Joseph Junior acts not ill,  
"There's no Fool like the old Fool" still!

ODE TO JOSEPH GRIMALDI

Joseph, farewell! dear funny Joe!

We met with mirth,—we part in pain!  
For many a long, long year must go

Ere Fun can see thy like again—  
For Nature does not keep great stores  
Of perfect Clowns—that are not *Boors*!

## Remonstratory Ode

FROM THE ELEPHANT AT  
EXETER 'CHANGE TO MR.  
MATHEWS AT THE ENGLISH  
OPERA-HOUSE

"See with what courteous action  
He beckons you to a more removed ground."

*—Hamlet.*

(Written by a Friend.)

I

Oh, Mr. Mathews! Sir!  
(If a plain elephant may speak his mind,  
And that I have a mind to speak I find  
By my inward stir)  
I long have thought, and wished to say,  
that we  
Mar our well-merited prosperity  
By being such near neighbours;  
My keeper now hath lent me pen and ink,  
Shoved in my truss of lunch, and tub of  
drink,  
And left me to my labours.

## REMONSTRATORY ODE

The whole menagerie is in repose,  
The Coatamundi is in his Sunday clothes,  
Watching the Lynx's most unnatural dose,  
The Panther is asleep and the Macaw;  
The Lion is engaged on something raw;  
The white bear cools his chin  
'Gainst the wet tin;  
And the confined old Monkey's in the  
straw.

All the nine little Lionettes are lying  
Slumbering in milk, and sighing;  
Miss Cross is sipping ox-tail soup,  
In her front coop,  
So here's the happy mid-day moment:—  
yes,  
I seize it, Mr. Mathews, to address  
A word or two  
To you  
On the subject of the ruin which must  
come  
By both being in the Strand, and both at  
home  
On the same nights; two treats  
So very near each other,  
As, oh my brother!  
To play old gooseberry with both receipts.



## REMONSTRATORY ODE

### II

When you begin  
Your summer fun, three times a week, at  
eight,  
And carriages roll up, and cits roll in,  
I feel a change in Exeter 'Change's  
change.  
And, dash my trunk, I hate  
To ring my bell, when you ring yours,  
and go  
With a diminished glory through *my* show!  
It is most strange;  
But crowds that meant to see me eat a  
stack,  
And sip a water-butt or so, and crack  
A root of mangel-wurzel with my foot,  
Eat little children's fruit,  
Pick from the floor small coins,  
And then turn slowly round and show my  
India-rubber loins:  
'Tis strange—most strange, but true,  
That these same crowds seek *you*!  
Pass *my* abode, and pay at *your* next door;  
It makes me roar  
With anguish when I think of this; I go  
With sad severity my nightly rounds  
Before one poor front row,  
My fatal funny foe!

## REMONSTRATORY ODE

And when I stoop, as duty bids, I sigh  
And feel that, while poor elephantine I  
Pick up a sixpence, you pick up the  
pounds!

### III

Could you not go?  
Could you not take the Coburg or the  
Surrey?  
Or Sadler's Wells—(I'm not in a hurry,  
I never am!) for the next season?—Oh!  
Woe! woe! woe!  
To both of us, if we remain; for not  
In silence will I bear my altered lot,  
To have you merry, sir, at my expense;  
No man of any sense,  
No true great person (and we both are  
great  
In our own ways) would tempt another's  
fate.  
I would myself depart  
In Mr. Cross's cart;  
But, like Othello, "am not easily moved".  
There's a nice house in Tottenham Court,  
they say,  
Fit for a single gentleman's small play;  
And more conveniently near your home:  
You'll easily go and come.  
Or get a room in the City—in some street—

## REMONSTRATORY ODE

Coachmaker's Hall, or the Paul's Head,  
Cateaton Street;  
Any large place, in short, in which to get  
your bread;  
But do not stay, and get  
*Me* into the *Gazette*!

### IV

Ah! the *Gazette*;  
I press my forehead with my trunk, and  
wet  
My tender cheek with elephantine tears,  
Shed of a walnut size  
From my wise eyes,  
To think of ruin after prosperous years.  
What a dread case would be  
For me—large me!  
To meet at Basinghall Street, the first and  
seventh  
And the eleventh!  
To undergo (D—n!)  
My last examination!  
To cringe and to surrender,  
Like a criminal offender,  
All my effects—my bell-pull, and my bell,  
My bolt, my stock of hay, my new deal  
cell.  
To post my *ivory*, sir!

## REMONSTRATORY ODE

And have some curious commissioner  
Very irreverently search my trunk;  
'Sdeath! I should die  
With rage, to find a tiger in possession  
Of my abode; up to his yellow knees  
In my old straw; and my profound pro-  
fession  
Entrusted to two beasts of assignees!

### V

The truth is simply this,—if you *will* stay  
Under my very nose,  
Filling your rows  
Just at my feeding time, to see *your* play,  
My mind's made up,  
No more at nine I sup,  
Except on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays,  
Sundays.  
From eight to eleven,  
As I hope for Heaven,  
On Thursdays, and on Saturdays, and on  
Mondays,  
I'll squeak and roar, and grunt without  
cessation,  
And utterly confound your recitation.  
And, mark me! all my friends of the furry  
snout  
Shall join a chorus shout,



## REMONSTRATORY ODE

We will be heard—we'll spoil  
Your wicked ruination toil.  
Insolvency must ensue  
To you, sir, you;  
Unless you move your opposition shop,  
And let me stop.

### VI

I have no more to say:—I do not write  
In anger, but in sorrow; I must look,  
However, to my interests every night,  
And they detest "your memorandum-  
book".  
If we could join our forces—I should like it;  
You do the dialogue, and I the songs,  
A voice to me belongs;  
(The Editors of the *Globe* and *Traveller*  
ring  
With praises of it, when I hourly sing  
"God save the King").  
If such a bargain could be schemed I'd  
strike it!  
I think, too, I could do the Welsh old  
man  
In the Youthful Days, if dressed upon  
your plan;  
And the attorney in your Paris trip,—  
I'm large about the hip!  
Now think of this!—for we cannot go on

*REMONSTRATORY ODE*

As next-door rivals, that my mind declares.

I must be penniless, or you be gone!

We must live separate, or else have shares.

I am a friend or foe

As you take this;

Let me your profitable hubbub miss,

Or be it "Mathews, Elephant, and Co.!"

## The Song of the Shirt

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread—  
Stitch! stitch! stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch  
She sang the "Song of the Shirt".

"Work! work! work!  
While the cock is crowing aloof!  
And work—work—work,  
Till the stars shine through the roof!  
It's O! to be a slave  
Along with the barbarous Turk,  
Where woman has never a soul to save,  
If this is Christian work!

"Work—work—work  
Till the brain begins to swim;  
Work—work—work  
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!

## THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

Seam, and gusset, and band,  
Band, and gusset, and seam,  
Till over the buttons I fall asleep  
And sew them on in a dream!

"O! Men with Sisters dear!  
O! Men with Mothers and Wives!  
It is not linen you're wearing out,  
But human creatures' lives!  
Stitch—stitch—stitch,  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
Sewing at once, with a double thread,  
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?  
That Phantom of grisly bone,  
I hardly fear his terrible shape,  
It seems so like my own—  
It seems so like my own,  
Because of the fasts I keep;  
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,  
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work!  
My labour never flags;  
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,  
A crust of bread—and rags.  
That shatter'd roof,—and this naked floor—  
A table—a broken chair—



## *THE SONG OF THE SHIRT*

And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank  
For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!  
From weary chime to chime,  
Work—work—work—  
As prisoners work for crime!  
Band, and gusset, and seam,  
Seam, and gusset, and band,  
Till the heart is sick, and the brain be-  
numb'd,  
As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,  
In the dull December light,  
And work—work—work,  
When the weather is warm and bright—  
While underneath the eaves  
The brooding swallows cling  
As if to show me their sunny backs  
And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath  
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—  
With the sky above my head,  
And the grass beneath my feet,  
For only one short hour  
To feel as I used to feel,  
Before I knew the woes of want  
And the walk that costs a meal!

## *THE SONG OF THE SHIRT*

"Oh! but for one short hour!  
A respite however brief!  
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,  
But only time for Grief!  
A little weeping would ease my heart,  
But in their briny bed  
My tears must stop, for every drop  
Hinders needle and thread!"

Seam, and gusset, and band,  
Band, and gusset, and seam,  
Work, work, work,  
Like the Engine that works by Steam!  
A mere machine of iron and wood,  
That toils for Mammon's sake,  
Without a brain to ponder and craze,  
Or a heart to feel—and break!

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sate in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread—  
Stitch! stitch! stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—  
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!—  
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

Ode to  
Captain Parry

"By the North Pole, I do challenge thee!"  
—*Love's Labour's Lost.*

Parry, my man! has thy brave leg  
Yet struck its foot against the peg  
On which the world is spun?  
Or hast thou found No Thoroughfare  
Writ by the hand of Nature there  
Where man has never run?

Hast thou yet trac'd the Great Unknown  
Of channels in the Frozen Zone  
Or held at Icy Bay,  
Hast thou still miss'd the proper track  
For homeward Indian men that lack  
A bracing by the way?

Still hast thou wasted toil and trouble  
On nothing but the North-Sea Bubble  
Of geographic scholar?

## ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

Or found new ways for ships to shape,  
Instead of winding round the Cape,  
A short cut thro' the collar!

Hast found the way that sighs were sent to  
The Pole—tho' God knows whom they  
went to!

That track reveal'd to Pope—  
Or if the Arctic waters sally,  
Or terminate in some blind alley,  
A chilly path to grope?

Alas! tho' Ross, in love with snows,  
Has painted them *couleur de rose*,  
It is a dismal doom,  
As Claudio saith, to Winter thrice,  
"In regions of thick-ribbèd ice"—  
All bright,—and yet all gloom!

'Tis well for Gheber souls that sit  
Before the fire and worship it  
With pecks of Wallsend coals,  
With feet upon the fender's front,  
\* Roasting their corns—like Mr. Hunt—  
To speculate on poles.

'Tis easy for our Naval Board—  
'Tis easy for our Civic Lord  
Of London and of ease,



## ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

That lies in ninety feet of down,  
With fur on his nocturnal gown,  
To talk of Frozen Seas!

'Tis fine for Monsieur Ude to sit,  
And prate about the mundane spit,  
And babble of *Cook's* track—  
He'd roast the leather off his toes,  
Ere he would trudge thro' polar snows,  
To plant a British *Jack*!

Oh, not the proud licentious great,  
That travel on a carpet skate,  
Can value toils like thine!  
What 'tis to take a Hecla range,  
Through ice unknown to Mrs. Grange,  
And alpine lumps of brine!

But we, that mount the Hill o' Rhyme,  
Can tell how hard it is to climb  
The lofty slippery steep.  
Ah! there are more Snow Hills than that  
Which doth black Newgate, like a hat,  
Upon its forehead, keep.

Perchance thou'rt now—while I am writ-  
ing—  
Feeling a bear's wet grinder biting  
About thy frozen spine!

*ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY*

Or thou thyself art eating whale,  
Oily, and underdone, and stale,  
That, haply, cross'd thy line!

But I'll not dream such dreams of ill—  
Rather will I believe thee still  
Safe cellar'd in the snow,—  
Reciting many a gallant story,  
Of British kings and British glory,  
To crony Esquimaux—

Cheering that dismal game where Night  
Makes one slow move from black to white  
Thro' all the tedious year,—  
Or smitten by some fond frost fair,  
That comb'd out crystals from her hair,  
Wooring a seal-skin Dear!

So much a long communion tends,  
As Byron says, to make us friends  
With what we daily view—  
God knows the daintiest taste may come  
To love a nose that's like a plum  
In marble, cold and blue!

To dote on hair, an oily fleece!  
As tho' it hung from Helen o' Greece—  
They say that love prevails

## ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

Ev'n in the veriest polar land—  
And surely she may steal thy hand  
That used to steal thy nails!

But ah, ere thou art fixt to marry,  
And take a polar Mrs. Parry,  
Think of a six months' gloom—  
Think of the wintry waste, and hers,  
Each furnish'd with a dozen *furs*,  
Think of thine icy *dome*!

Think of the children born to *blubber*!  
Ah me! hast thou an Indian rubber  
Inside!—to hold a meal  
For months,—about a stone and half  
Of whale, and part of a sea calf—  
A fillet of salt veal!—

Some walrus ham—no trifle but  
A decent steak—a solid cut  
Of seal—no wafer slice!  
A reindeer's tongue and drink beside!  
Gallons of Sperm—not rectified!  
And pails of water-ice!

Oh, canst thou fast and then feast thus?  
Still come away, and teach to us  
Those blessed alternations—

ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

To-day, to run our dinners fine,  
To feed on air and then to dine  
With Civic Corporations—

To save th' Old Bailey daily shilling,  
And then to take a half-year's filling  
In P. N.'s pious Row—  
When ask'd to Hock and haunch o' ven'son,  
Thro' something we have worn our pens  
on  
For Longman and his Co.

O come and tell us what the Pole is,—  
Whether it singular and sole is,  
Or straight, or crooked bent,—  
If very thick or very thin,—  
Made of what wood—and if akin  
To those there be in Kent.

There's Combe, there's Spurzheim, and  
there's Gall,  
Have talk'd of poles—yet, after all,  
What has the public learn'd?  
And Hunt's account must still defer,—  
He sought the *poll* at Westminster—  
And is not yet *return'd*!

Alvanly asks if whist, dear soul,  
Is play'd in snow-towns near the Pole,  
And how the fur-man deals?



## ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

And Eldon doubts if it be true,  
That icy Chancellors really do  
Exist upon the *seals*!

Barrow, by well-fed office grates,  
Talks of his own bechristen'd Straits,  
And longs that he were there;  
And Croker, in his cabriolet,  
Sighs o'er his brown horse, at his Bay,  
And pants to cross the *mer*!

O come away, and set us right,  
And, haply, throw a northern light  
On questions such as these:—  
Whether, when this drown'd world was  
lost,  
The surflux waves were lock'd in frost,  
And turn'd to Icy Seas?

Is Ursa Major white or black?  
Or do the Polar tribes attack  
Their neighbours—and what for?  
Whether they ever play at cuffs,  
And then, if they take off their muffs  
In pugilistic war?

Tell us, is *Winter* champion there,  
As in our milder fighting air?  
Say, what are *Chilly* loans?

## ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

What cures they have for rheums beside,  
And if their hearts get ossified  
From eating bread of bones?

Whether they are such dwarfs—the quicker  
To circulate the vital liquor,—  
And then, from head to heel—  
How short the Methodists must choose  
Their dumpy envoys not to lose  
Their toes in spite of zeal?

Whether 't will soften or sublime it  
To preach of Hell in such a climate—  
Whether may Wesley hope  
To win their souls—or that old function  
Of seals—with the extreme of unction—  
Bespeaks them for the Pope?

Whether the lamps will e'er be "learned"  
Where six months' "midnight oil" is  
burned,  
Or Letters must defer  
With people that have never conn'd  
An A, B, C, but live beyond  
*The Sound of Lancaster!*

O come away at any rate—  
Well hast thou earn'd a downier state,  
With all thy hardy peers—

ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

Good lack, thou must be glad to smell  
dock,  
And rub thy feet with opodeldoc,  
After such frosty years.

Mayhap, some gentle dame at last,  
Smit by the perils thou hast pass'd,  
However coy before,  
Shall bid thee now set up thy rest  
In that *Brest Harbour*, Woman's breast,  
And tempt the Fates no more!

## The Last Man

'T was in the year two thousand and one,  
A pleasant morning of May,  
I sat on the gallows-tree' all alone,  
A-chanting a merry lay,—  
To think how the pest had spared my life,  
To sing with the larks that day!—

When up the heath came a jolly knave,  
Like a scarecrow, all in rags:  
It made me crow to see his old duds  
All abroad in the wind, like flags:—  
So up he came to the timbers' foot  
And pitch'd down his greasy bags.—

Good Lord! how blythe the old beggar  
was!

At pulling out his scraps,—  
The very sight of his broken orts  
Made a work in his wrinkled chaps:  
“Come down,” says he, “you Newgate  
bird,  
And have a taste of my snaps!”——



## THE LAST MAN

Then down the rope, like a tar from the  
mast,  
I slided, and by him stood;  
But I wished myself on the gallows again  
When I smelt that beggar's food,—  
A foul beef-bone, and a mouldy crust;—  
“Oh!” quoth he, “the heavens are good!”

Then after this grace he cast him down:  
Says I, “You'll get sweeter air  
A pace or two off, on the windward side,”—  
For the felons' bones lay there—  
But he only laugh'd at the empty skulls,  
And offered them part of his fare.

“I never harm'd *them*, and they won't  
harm me;  
Let the proud and the rich be cravens!”  
I did not like that strange beggar man,  
He look'd so up at the heavens.  
Anon he shook out his empty old poke;  
“There's the crumbs,” saith he, “for the  
ravens!”

It made me angry to see his face,  
It had such a jesting look;  
But while I made up my mind to speak,  
A small case-bottle he took:

## THE LAST MAN

Quoth he, "though 'I gather the green  
water-cress,  
My drink is not of the brook!"

Full manners-like he tender'd the dram;  
Oh, it came of a dainty cask!  
But, whenever it came his turn to pull,  
"Your leave, good sir, I must ask;  
But I always wipe the brim with my sleeve  
When a hangman sups at my flask!"

And then he laugh'd so loudly and long,  
The churl was quite out of breath;  
I thought the very Old One was come  
To mock me before my death,  
And wish'd I had buried the dead men's  
bones  
That were lying about the heath!

But the beggar gave me a jolly clap—  
"Come, let us pledge each other,  
For all the wide world is dead beside,  
And we are brother and brother—  
I've a yearning for thee in my heart,  
As if we had come of one mother.

"I've a yearning for thee in my heart  
That almost makes me weep,  
For as I pass'd from town to town  
The folks were all stone-asleep,—

## THE LAST MAN

But when I saw thee sitting aloft,  
It made me both laugh and leap!"

Now a curse (I thought) be on his love,  
And a curse upon his mirth,—  
An' if it were not for that beggar man  
I'd be the King of the earth,—  
But I promis'd myself an hour should come  
To make him rue his birth!—

So down we sat and bous'd again  
Till the sun was in mid-sky,  
When, just when the gentle west-wind  
came,  
We hearken'd a dismal cry;  
"Up, up, on the tree," quoth the beggar  
man,  
"Till these horrible dogs go by!"

And, lo! from the forest's far-off skirts,  
They came all yelling for gore,  
A hundred hounds pursuing at once,  
And a panting hart before,  
Till he sank adown at the gallows' foot,  
And there his haunches they tore!

His haunches they tore, without a horn  
To tell when the chase was done;  
And there was not a single scarlet coat  
To flaunt it in the sun!—

## THE LAST MAN

I turn'd, and look'd at the beggar man,  
And his tears dropt one by one!

And with curses sore he chid at the hounds,  
Till the last dropt out of sight,  
Anon, saith he, "Let's down again,  
And ramble for our delight,  
For the world's all free, and we may  
choose  
A right cozie barn for to-night!"

With that, he set up his staff on end,  
And it fell with the point due West;  
So we far'd that way to a city great,  
Where the folks had died of the pest—  
It was fine to enter in house and hall  
Wherever it liked me best;—

For the porters all were stiff and cold,  
And could not lift their heads;  
And when we came where their masters  
lay,  
The rats leapt out of the beds;—  
The grandest palaces in the land  
Were as free as workhouse sheds.

But the beggar man made a mumping  
face,  
And knocked at every gate:



## THE LAST MAN

It made me curse to hear how he whined,  
So our fellowship turned to hate,  
And I bade him walk the world by himself,  
For I scorn'd so humble a mate!

So *he* turn'd right, and *I* turn'd left,  
As if we had never met;  
And I chose a fair stone house for myself,  
For the city was all to let;  
And for three brave holidays drank my fill  
Of the choicest that I could get.

And because my jerkin was coarse and  
worn,  
I got me a properer vest;  
It was purple velvet, stitch'd o'er with gold,  
And a shining star at the breast,—  
'Twas enough to fetch old Joan from her  
grave  
To see me so purely drest!

But Joan was dead and under the mould,  
And every buxom lass;  
In vain I watch'd at the window pane  
For a Christian soul to pass!  
But sheep and kine wander'd up the street,  
And brows'd on the new-come grass.—

When lo! I spied the old beggar man,  
And lustily he did sing!—

## THE LAST MAN

His rags were lapp'd in a scarlet cloak,  
And a crown he had like a King;  
So he stept right up before my gate  
And danc'd me a saucy fling!

Heaven mend us all!—but, within my  
mind,

I had killed him then and there;  
To see him lording so braggart-like  
That was born to his beggar's fare,  
And how he had stolen the royal crown  
His betters were meant to wear.

But God forbid that a thief should die  
Without his share of the laws!  
So I nimbly whipt my tackle out,  
And soon tied up his claws,—  
I was judge myself, and jury, and all,  
And solemnly tried the cause.

But the beggar man would not plead, but  
cried

Like a babe without its corals,  
For he knew how hard it is apt to go  
When the law and a thief have quarrels,—  
There was not a Christian soul alive  
To speak a word for his morals.

Oh, how gaily I doff'd my costly gear.  
And put on my work-day clothes;

## THE LAST MAN

I was tired of such a long Sunday life,—  
And never was one of the sloths;  
But the beggar man grumbled a weary  
    deal,  
And made many crooked mouths.

So I haul'd him off to the gallows' foot,  
And blinded him in his bags;  
'T was a weary job to heave him up,  
For a doom'd man always lags;  
But by ten of the clock he was off his legs  
In the wind, and airing his rags!

So there he hung, and there I stood,  
The LAST MAN left alive,  
To have my own will of all the earth:  
Quoth I, now I shall thrive!  
But when was ever honey made  
With one bee in a hive?

My conscience began to gnaw my heart  
Before the day was done,  
For the other men's lives had all gone out,  
Like candles in the sun!—  
But it seem'd as if I had broke, at last,  
A thousand necks in one!

So I went and cut his body down  
To bury it decentlie;—

## THE LAST MAN

God send there were any good soul alive  
To do the like by me!  
But the wild dogs came with terrible speed,  
And bay'd me up the tree!

My sight was like a drunkard's sight,  
And my head began to swim,  
To see their jaws all white with foam,  
Like the ravenous ocean brim;—  
But when the wild dogs trotted away  
Their jaws were bloody and grim!

Their jaws were bloody and grim, good  
Lord!

But the beggar man, where was he?—  
There was nought of him but some ribbons  
of rags

Below the gallows-tree!—  
I know the Devil, when I am dead,  
Will send his hounds for me!—

I've buried my babies one by one,  
And dug the deep hole for Joan,  
And covered the faces of kith and kin,  
And felt the old churchyard stone  
Go cold to my heart, full many a time,  
But I never felt so lone!

For the lion and Adam were company,  
And the tiger him beguiled;



## THE LAST MAN

But the simple kine are foes to my life,  
And the household brutes are wild.  
If the veriest cur would lick my hand,  
I could love it like a child!

And the beggar man's ghost besets my  
dream,  
At night, to make me madder,—  
And my wretched conscience, within my  
breast,  
Is like a stinging adder;—  
I sigh when I pass the gallows' foot,  
And look at the rope and ladder!

For hanging looks sweet,—but, alas! in  
vain,  
My desperate fancy begs,—  
I must turn my cup of sorrows quite up,  
And drink it to the dregs,—  
For there is not another man alive,  
In the world, to pull my legs!

## Faithless Sally Brown

AN OLD BALLAD

Young Ben he was a nice young man,  
A carpenter by trade;  
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,  
That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetch'd a walk one day,  
They met a press-gang crew;  
And Sally she did faint away,  
Whilst Ben he was brought to.

The Boatswain swore with wicked words,  
Enough to shock a saint,  
That though she did seem in a fit,  
'Twas nothing but a feint.

"Come, girl," said he, "hold up your head,  
He'll be as good as me;  
For when your swain is in our boat,  
A boatswain he will be."

*FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN*

So when they'd made their game of her,  
And taken off her elf,  
She roused, and found she only was  
A-coming to herself.

"And is he gone, and is he gone?"  
She cried, and wept outright:  
"Then I will to the water side,  
And see him out of sight."

A waterman came up to her,  
"Now, young woman," said he,  
"If you weep on so, you will make  
Eye-water in the sea."

"Alas! they've taken my beau Ben  
To sail with old Benbow;"  
And her woe began to run afresh,  
As if she'd said Gee woe!

Says he, "They've only taken him  
To the Tender ship, you see;"  
"The Tender-ship," cried Sally Brown,  
"What a hard-ship that must be!

"O! would I were a mermaid now,  
For then I'd follow him;  
But Oh!—I'm not a fish-woman,  
And so I cannot swim.

## *FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN*

"Alas! I was not born beneath  
The virgin and the scales,  
So I must curse my cruel stars,  
And walk about in Wales."

Now Ben had sail'd to many a place  
That's underneath the world;  
But in two years the ship came home,  
And all her sails were fur'l'd.

But when he call'd on Sally Brown,  
To see how she got on,  
He found she'd got another Ben,  
Whose Christian-name was John.

"O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown,  
How could you serve me so?  
I've met with many a breeze before,  
But never such a blow."

Then reading on his 'bacco-box  
He heaved a bitter sigh,  
And then began to eye his pipe,  
And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing "All's Well",  
But could not though he tried;  
His head was turn'd, and so he chew'd  
His pigtail till he died.



*FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN*

His death, which happen'd in his berth,  
At forty-odd befell:  
They went and told the sexton, and  
The sexton toll'd the bell.

As It Fell  
Upon a Day

Oh! what's befallen Bessie Brown,  
She stands so squalling in the street;  
She's let her pitcher tumble down,  
And all the water's at her feet!

The little school-boys stood about,  
And laughed to see her pumping,  
pumping;  
Now with a curtsy to the spout,  
And then upon her tiptoes jumping!

Long time she waited for her neighbours  
To have their turns;—but she must lose  
The watery wages of her labours,—  
Except a little in her shoes!

Without a voice to tell her tale,  
And ugly transport in her face;  
All like a jugless nightingale,  
She thinks of her bereaved case.

*AS IT FELL UPON A DAY*

At last she sobs—she cries—she screams!—  
And pours her flood of sorrows out,  
From eyes and mouth, in mingled streams,  
Just like the lion on the spout.

For well poor Bessie knows her mother  
Must lose her tea for water's lack,  
That Sukey burns—and baby-brother  
Must be dry-rubbed with huck-a-back!

## The Stag-eyed Lady

A MOORISH TALE

Scheherazade immediately began the following story:

Ali Ben Ali (did you never read

His wond'rous acts that chronicles re-  
late,—

How there was one in pity might exceed  
The sack of Troy?) magnificent he sate  
Upon the throne of greatness—great in-  
deed,

For those that he had under him were  
great—

The horse he rode on, shod with silver  
nails,

Was a Bashaw—Bashaws have horses'  
tails.

Ali was cruel—a most cruel one!

'Tis rumour'd he had strangled his own  
mother—



## THE STAG-EYED LADY.

Howbeit such deeds of darkness he had  
done,

'Tis thought he would have slain his  
elder brother

And sister too—but happily that none

Did live within *harm's* length of one  
another,

Else he had sent the Sun in all its blaze  
To endless night, and shorten'd the Moon's  
days.

Despotic power, that mars a weak man's  
wit,

And makes a bad man—absolutely bad,  
Made Ali wicked—to a fault:—'t is fit

Monarchs should have some check-  
strings; but he had

No curb upon his will—no, not a *bit*;

Wherefore he did not reign well—and  
full glad

His slaves had been to hang him—but they  
falter'd,

And let him live unhang'd—and still un-  
alter'd.

Until he got a sage-bush of a beard,

Wherein an Attic owl might roost—a  
trail

### *THE STAG-EYED LADY*

Of bristly hair—that, honour'd and un-  
shear'd,

Grew downward like old women and  
cow's tail:

Being a sign of age—some grey appear'd,  
Mingling with duskier brown its warn-  
ings pale;

But yet not so poetic as when Time  
Comes like Jack Frost, and whitens it in  
rime.

Ben Ali took the hint, and much did vex  
His royal bosom that he had no son,

No living child of the more noble sex,

To stand in his Morocco shoes—not one  
To make a negro-pollard—or tread necks

When he was gone—doom'd, when his  
days were done,

To leave the very city of his fame  
Without an Ali to keep up his name.

Therefore he chose a lady for his love,  
Singling from out the herd one stag-eyed  
dear;

So call'd, because her lustrous eyes, above  
All eyes, were dark, and timorous, and  
clear;

Then, through his Muftis piously he strove,  
And drumm'd with proxy-prayers Mo-  
hammed's ear,

## THE STAG-EYED LADY

Knowing a boy for certain must come  
of it,  
Or else he was not praying to his *Profit*.

Beer will grow mothery, and ladies fair  
Will grow like beer; so did that stag-  
eyed dame:

Ben Ali hoping for a son and heir,  
*Boyed* up his hopes, and even chose a  
name

Of mighty hero that his child should bear;  
He made so certain ere his chicken came:  
But oh! all worldly wit is little worth,  
Nor knoweth what to-morrow will bring  
forth.

To-morrow came, and with to-morrow's  
sun

A little daughter to this world of sins.  
*Miss-fortunes* never come alone—so one  
Brought on another, like a pair of twins:  
Twins! female twins!—it was enough to  
stun

Their little wits and scare them from  
their skins,  
To hear their father stamp, and curse and  
swear,  
Pulling his beard because he had no heir.

## THE STAG-EYED LADY

Then strove their stag-eyed mother to calm  
down

This his paternal rage, and thus address:  
"Oh! Most Serene! why dost thou stamp  
and frown,

And box the compass of the royal chest?  
Ah! thou wilt mar that portly trunk, I own  
I love to gaze on!—Pr'ythee, thou hadst  
best

Pocket thy fists. Nay, love, if you so thin  
Your heard, you'll want a wig upon your  
chin!"

But not her words, nor e'en her tears, could  
slack

The quicklime of his rage, that hotter  
grew;

He call'd his slaves to bring an ample sack  
Wherein a woman might be *poked*: a few  
Dark grimly men felt pity and look'd black  
At this sad order; but their slaveships  
knew

When any dared demur, his sword so  
bending

Cut off the "head and front of their  
offending".

For Ali had a sword, much like himself,  
A crooked blade, guilty of human gore—



## THE STAG-EYED LADY

The trophies it had lopp'd from many an  
elf

Were stuck at his *head*-quarters by the  
score—

Nor yet in peace he laid it on the shelf,

But jested with it, and his wit cut sore;  
So that (as they of Public Houses speak)  
He often did his dozen *butts* a week.

Therefore his slaves, with most obedient  
fears,

Came with the sack the lady to enclose;  
In vain from her stag-eyes "the big round  
tears

Coursed one another down her innocent  
nose";

In vain her tongue wept sorrow in their  
ears;

Though there were some felt willing to  
oppose,

Yet when their heads came in their heads,  
that minute,

Though 't was a piteous *case*, they put her  
in it.

And when the sack was tied, some two or  
three

Of these black undertakers slowly  
brought her

## THE STAG-EYED LADY

To a kind of Moorish Serpentine; for she  
Was doom'd to have a *winding sheet of*  
*water.*

Then farewell, earth—farewell to the green  
tree—

Farewell, the sun—the moon—each little  
daughter!

She's shot from off the shoulders of a  
black,

Like a bag of Wall's-End from a coalman's  
back.

The waters oped, and the wide sack full-  
fill'd

All that the waters oped, as down it fell;  
Then closed the wave, and then the surface  
rill'd

A ring above her, like a water-knell;  
A moment more, and all its face was still'd,  
And not a guilty heave was left to tell  
That underneath its calm and blue trans-  
parence

A dame lay drown'd in her sack, like  
Clarence.

But Heaven beheld, and awful witness  
bore,

The moon in black eclipse deceased that  
night,

### THE STAG-EYED LADY

Like Desdemona smother'd by the Moor;  
The lady's natal star with pale affright  
Fainted and fell—and what were stars  
before,

Turn'd comets as the tale was brought to  
light;  
And all look'd downward on the fatal  
wave,  
And made their own reflections on her  
grave.

Next night, a head—a little lady head,  
Push'd through the waters a most glassy  
face,

With weedy tresses, thrown apart and  
spread,

Comb'd by 'live ivory, to show the space  
Of a pale forehead, and two eyes that shed  
A soft blue mist, breathing a bloomy  
grace

Over their sleepy lids;—and so she rais'd  
Her *aqualine* nose above the stream, and  
gazed.

She oped her lips—lips of a gentle blush,  
So pale, it seem'd near drowned to a  
white,—

## THE STAG-EYED LADY

She oped her lips, and forth there sprang  
a gush  
Of music bubbling through the surface  
light;  
The leaves are motionless, the breezes hush  
To listen to the air—and through the  
night  
There come these words of a most plaintive  
ditty,  
Sobbing as they would break all hearts  
with pity:

## THE WATER PERI'S SONG

Farewell, farewell to my mother's own  
daughter,  
The child that she wet-nursed is lapp'd in  
the wave!  
The *Mussul*-man coming to fish in this  
water,  
Adds a tear to the flood that weeps over  
her grave.

This sack is her coffin, this water's her  
bier,  
This greyish *bath* cloak is her funeral  
pall,  
And, stranger, O stranger! this song that  
you hear  
Is her epitaph, elegy, dirges, and all!



*THE STAG-EYED LADY*

Farewell, farewell, to the child of Al  
Hassan,

My mother's own daughter—the last of  
her race—

She's a corpse, the poor body! and lies in  
this basin,

And sleeps in the water that washes her  
face.

Miss Kilmansegg  
and her  
Precious Leg

A GOLDEN LEGEND

"What is here?  
Gold! yellow, glittering, precious gold?"  
—*Timon of Athens.*

HER PEDIGREE

To trace the Kilmansegg pedigree  
To the very roots of the family tree  
Were a task as rash as ridiculous:  
Through antediluvian mists as thick  
As London fog such a line to pick  
Were enough, in truth, to puzzle Old  
Nick,—

Not to name Sir Harris Nicholas.

It wouldn't require much verbal strain  
To trace the Kill-man, perchance, to Cain;  
But, waving all such digressions,  
Suffice it, according to family lore,  
A Patriarch Kilmansegg lived of yore,  
Who was famed for his great possessions.

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Tradition said he feather'd his nest  
Through an Agricultural Interest  
In the Golden Age of Farming;  
When golden eggs were laid by the geese,  
And Colchian sheep wore a golden fleece,  
And golden pippins—the sterling kind  
Of Hesperus—now so hard to find—  
Made Horticulture quite charming!

A Lord of Land, on his own estate,  
He lived at a very lively rate,  
But his income would bear carousing;  
Such acres he had of pasture and heath,  
With herbage so rich from the ore beneath,  
The very ewes' and lambkins' teeth  
Were turned into gold by browsing.

He gave, without any extra thrift,  
A flock of sheep for a birthday gift  
To each son of his loins, or daughter;  
And his debts—if debts he had—at will  
He liquidated by giving each bill  
A dip in Pactolian water.

'Twas said that even his pigs of lead,  
By crossing with some by Midas bred,  
Made a perfect mine of his piggery.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And as for cattle, one yearling bull  
Was worth all Smithfield-market full  
Of the Golden Bulls of Pope Gregory.

The high-bred horses within his stud,  
Like human creatures of birth and blood,  
Had their Golden Cups and flagons:  
And as for the common husbandry nags,  
Their noses were tied in money-bags,  
When they stopp'd with the carts and  
wagons.

Moreover, he had a Golden Ass,  
Sometimes at stall, and sometimes at  
grass,

That was worth his own weight in  
money—  
And a golden hive, on a Golden Bank,  
Where golden bees, by alchemical prank,  
Gather'd gold instead of honey.

Gold! and gold! and gold without end!  
He had gold to lay by, and gold to spend,  
Gold to give, and gold to lend,

And reversions of gold *in futuro*.  
In wealth the family revell'd and roll'd,  
Himself and wife and sons so bold;—  
And his daughters sang to their harps of  
gold

“O bella eta 'del' oro!”



## MISS KILMANSEGG

Such was the tale of the Kilmansegg Kin,  
In golden text on a vellum skin,  
Though certain people would wink and  
grin,

And declare the whole story a parable—  
That the Ancestor rich was one Jacob  
Ghrimes,  
Who held a long lease, in prosperous times,  
Of acres, pasture and arable.

That as money makes money, his golden  
bees  
Were the five per cents, or which you  
please

When his cash was more than plenty—  
That the golden cups were racing affairs;  
And his daughters, who sang Italian airs,  
Had their golden harps of Clementi.

That the Golden Ass, or Golden Bull,  
Was English John, with his pockets full,  
Then at war by land and water:  
While beef, and mutton, and other meat,  
Were almost as dear as money to eat,  
And Farmers reaped Golden Harvests of  
wheat  
At the Lord knows what per quarter!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

### HER BIRTH

What different dooms our birthdays bring!  
For instance, one little mannikin thing  
Survives to wear many a wrinkle;  
While Death forbids another to wake,  
And a son that it took nine moons to  
make  
Expires without even a twinkle!

Into this world we come like ships,  
Launch'd from the docks, and stocks, and  
slips,  
For fortune fair or fatal;  
And one little craft is cast away,  
In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,  
While another rides safe at Port Natal.

What different lots our stars accord!  
This babe to be hail'd and woo'd as a  
Lord,  
And that to be shunned like a leper!  
One, to the world's wine, honey, and corn,  
Another, like Colchester native, born  
To its vinegar, only, and pepper.

One is littered under a roof  
Neither wind nor water proof—  
That's the prose of Love in a Cottage—  
A puny, naked, shivering wretch,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

The whole of whose birthright would not  
fetch,  
Though Robins himself drew up the  
sketch,  
The bid of "a mess of pottage".

Born of Fortunatus's kin,  
Another comes tenderly usher'd in  
To a prospect all bright and burnish'd:  
No tenant he, for life's back slums—  
He comes to the world as a gentleman  
comes  
To a lodging ready furnish'd.

And the other sex—the tender—the fair—  
What wide reverses of fate are there!  
While Margaret, charm'd by the Bulbul  
rare,  
In a garden of Gul reposes—  
Poor Peggy hawks nosebags from street  
to street,  
Till—think of that, who find life so  
sweet!—  
She hates the smell of roses!

Not so with the infant Kilmansegg!  
She was not born to steal or beg,  
Or gather cresses in ditches;  
To plait the straw or bind the shoe,

AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Or sit all day to hem and sew,  
As females must, and not a few—  
To fill their insides with stitches!

She was not doom'd, for bread to eat,  
To be put to her hands as well as her  
feet—

To carry home linen from mangles—  
Or heavy-hearted, and weary-limb'd,  
To dance on a rope in a jacket trimm'd  
With as many blows as spangles.

She was one of those who by Fortune's  
boon  
Are born, as they say, with a silver spoon  
In her mouth, not a wooden ladle:  
To speak according to poet's wont,  
Plutus as sponsor stood at her font,  
And Midas rock'd the cradle.

At her first *début* she found her head  
On a pillow of down, in a downy bed,  
With a damask canopy over.  
For although, by the vulgar popular saw,  
All mothers are said to be "in the straw",  
Some children are born in clover.

Her very first draught of vital air,  
It was not the common chameleon fare  
Of plebeian lungs and noses,—



MISS KILMANSEGG

No—her earliest sniff  
Of this world was a whiff  
Of the genuine Otto of Roses!

When she saw the light—it was no mere  
ray  
Of that light so common—so every-day—  
That the sun each morning launches—  
But six wax tapers dazzled her eyes,  
From a thing—a gooseberry bush for  
size—  
With a golden stem and branches.

She was born exactly at half-past two,  
As witness'd a timepiece in or-molu  
That stood on a marble table—  
Showing at once the time of day,  
And a team of *Gildings* running away  
As fast as they were able,  
With a golden God, with a golden Star,  
And a golden spear, in a golden Car,  
According to Grecian fable.

Like other babes, at her birth she cried;  
Which made a sensation far and wide,—  
Ay, for twenty miles around her;  
For though to the ear 't was nothing more  
Than an infant's squall, it was really the  
roar  
Of a Fifty-thousand Pounder!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

It shook the next heir  
In his library chair,  
And made him cry, "Confound her!"

Of signs and omens there was no dearth,  
Any more than at Owen Glendower's birth,  
Or the advent of other great people:  
Two bullocks dropp'd dead,  
As if knock'd on the head,  
And barrels of stout  
And ale ran about,  
And the village-bells such a peal rang  
out,  
That they cracked the village steeple.

In no time at all, like mushroom spawn,  
Tables sprang up all over the lawn;  
Not furnish'd scantily or shabbily,  
But on scale as vast  
As that huge repast,  
With its loads and cargoes  
Of drink and botargoes,  
At the Birth of the Babe in Rabelais.

Hundreds of men were turn'd into beasts,  
Like the guests at Circe's horrible feasts,  
By the magic of ale and cider:  
And each country lass, and each country  
lad,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Began to caper and dance like mad,  
And even some old ones appear'd to have  
    had  
A bite from the Naples Spider.

Then as night came on,  
It had scared King John,  
Who considered such signs not risible,  
To have seen the maroons,  
And the whirling moons,  
And the serpents of flame,  
And wheels of the same,  
That according to some were "whizzable".

Oh, happy Hope of the Kilmanseggs!  
Thrice happy in head, and body, and legs,  
    That her parents had such full pockets!  
For had she been born of Want and Thrift,  
For care and nursing all adrift,  
It's ten to one she had had to make shift  
    With rickets instead of rockets!

And how was the precious Baby drest?  
In a robe of the East, with lace of the  
    West,  
Like one of Croesus's issue—  
    Her best bibs were made  
    Of rich gold brocade,  
And the others of silver tissue.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And when the Baby inclined to nap  
She was lull'd on a Gros de Naples lap,  
By a nurse in a modish Paris cap,

Of notions so exalted,  
She drank nothing lower than Curaçoa,  
Maraschino, or pink Noyau,  
And on principle never malted.

From a golden boat, with a golden spoon,  
The babe was fed night, morning, and  
noon;

And altho' the tale seems fabulous,  
'T is said her tops and bottoms were gilt,  
Like the oats in that Stable-yard Palace built  
For the Horse of Heliogabalus.

And when she took to squall and kick,  
For pain will wring, and pins will prick,  
E'en the wealthiest nabob's daughter—  
They gave her no vulgar Dalby or gin,  
But a liquor with leaf of gold therein,  
Videlicet,—Dantzic Water.

In short, she was born, and bred, and nurst,  
And drest in the best from the very first,  
To please the genteelest censor—  
And then, as soon as strength would allow,  
Was vaccinated, as babes are now,  
With virus ta'en from the best-bred cow  
Of Lord Althorpe's—now Earl Spencer.



## MISS KILMANSEGG

### HER CHRISTENING

Though Shakespeare asks us, "What's  
in a name?"

(As if cognomens were much the same),  
There's really a very great scope in it.  
A name?—why, wasn't there Doctor Dodd,  
That servant at once of Mammon and God,  
Who found four thousand pounds and odd,  
A prison—a cart—and a rope in it?

A name?—if the party had a voice,  
What mortal would be a Bugg by choice,  
As a Hogg, a Grubb, or a Chubb rejoice,  
Or any such nauseous blazon?  
Not to mention many a vulgar name,  
That would make a door-plate blush for  
shame,  
If door-plates were not so brazen!

A name?—it has more than nominal  
worth,  
And belongs to good or bad luck at  
birth—

As dames of a certain degree know,  
In spite of his Page's hat and hose,  
His Page's jacket, and buttons in rows,  
Bob only sounds like a page in prose  
Till turn'd into Rupertino.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Now to christen the infant Kilmansegg,  
For days and days it was quite a plague,  
To hunt the list in the Lexicon:  
And scores were tried like coin, by the ring,  
Ere names were found just the proper thing  
For a minor rich as a Mexican.

Then cards were sent the presence to beg  
Of all the kin of Kilmansegg,  
White, yellow, and brown relations:  
Brothers, Wardens of City Halls,  
And Uncles—rich as three Golden Balls  
From taking pledges of nations.

Nephews, whom Fortune seem'd to bewitch,  
Rising in life like rockets—  
Nieces whose dowries knew no hitch—  
Aunts as certain of dying rich  
As candles in golden sockets—  
Cousins German and cousins' sons,  
All thriving and opulent—some had tons  
Of Kentish hops in their pockets!

For money had stuck to the race thro' life  
(As it did to the bushel when cash so rife  
Posed Ali Baba's brother's wife)—  
And down to the Cousins and Cozlings,

MISS KILMANSEGG

The fortunate brood of the Kilmanseggs,  
As if they had come out of golden eggs,  
Were all as wealthy as "Goslings".

It would fill a Court Gazette to name  
What East and West End people came  
To the rite of Christianity:  
The lofty Lord, and the titled Dame,  
All di'monds, plumes, and urbanity:  
His Lordship the May'r with his golden  
chain,  
And two Gold Sticks, and the Sheriffs  
twain,  
Nine foreign Counts, and other great men  
With their orders and stars, to help M. or N.  
To renounce all pomp and vanity.

To paint the maternal Kilmansegg  
The pen of an Eastern Poet would beg,  
And need an elaborate sonnet;  
How she sparkled with gems whenever she  
stirr'd,  
And her head niddle-noddled at every word,  
And seem'd so happy, a Paradise Bird  
Had nidificated upon it.

And Sir Jacob the Father strutted and  
bow'd,  
And smiled to himself, and laugh'd aloud,  
To think of his heiress and daughter—

*AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

And then in his pockets he made a grope,  
And then, in the fulness of joy and hope,  
Seem'd washing his hands with invisible  
soap

In imperceptible water.

He had roll'd in money like pigs in mud,  
Till it seem'd to have enter'd into his blood

By some occult projection:

And his cheeks, instead of a healthy hue,  
As yellow as any guinea grew,  
Making the common phrase seem true,  
About a rich complexion.

And now came the Nurse, and during a  
pause,

Her dead-leaf satin would fitly cause

A very autumnal rustle—

So full of figure, so full of fuss,

As she carried about the babe to buss,

She seem'd to be nothing but bustle.

A wealthy Nabob was Godpapa,

And an Indian Begum was Godmamma,

Whose jewels a Queen might covet—

And the Priest was a Vicar, and Dean  
withal

Of that Temple we see with a Golden Ball,

And a Golden Cross above it.



### MISS KILMANSEGG

The Font was a bowl of American gold,  
Won by Raleigh in days of old,  
In spite of Spanish bravado;  
And the Book of Pray'r was so overrun  
With gilt devices, it shone in the sun  
Like a copy—a presentation one—  
Of Humboldt's "El Dorado".

Gold! and gold! and nothing but gold!  
The same auriferous shine behold  
Wherever the eye could settle!  
On the walls—the sideboard—the ceiling-  
sky—  
On the gorgeous footmen standing by,  
In coats to delight a miner's eye  
With seams of the precious metal.

Gold! and gold! and besides the gold,  
The very robe of the infant told  
A tale of wealth in every fold;  
It lapp'd her like a vapour!  
So fine! so thin! the mind at a loss  
Could compare it to nothing except a cross  
Of cobwebs with bank-note paper.

Then her pearls—'t was a perfect sight,  
forsooth,  
To see them, like "the dew of her youth",  
In such a plentiful sprinkle.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Meanwhile, the Vicar read through the  
form,  
And gave her another, not overwarm,  
That made her little eyes twinkle.

Then the babe was cross'd and bless'd  
amain,  
But instead of the Kate, or Ann, or Jane,  
Which the humbler female endorses—  
Instead of one name, as some people prefix,  
Kilmansegg went at the tails of six,  
Like a carriage of state with its horses.

Oh, then the kisses she got and hugs!  
The golden mugs and the golden jugs  
That lent fresh rays to the midges!  
The golden knives, and the golden spoons,  
The gems that sparkled like fairy boons;  
It was one of the Kilmanseggs' own  
saloons,  
But looked like Rundell and Bridge's!

Gold! and gold! the new and the old!  
The company ate and drank from gold,  
They revell'd, they sang, and were merry;  
And one of the Gold Sticks rose from his  
chair,  
And toasted "the Lass with the golden  
hair"  
In a bumper of golden Sherry.

## MISS KILMANSEGG

Gold! still gold! it rain'd on the Nurse,  
Who—unlike Danæ—was none the worse!  
There was nothing but guineas glistening!  
Fifty were given to Doctor James  
For calling the little Baby names,  
And for saying Amen!  
The Clerk had ten,  
And that was the end of the Christening.

## HER CHILDHOOD

Our youth! our childhood! that spring of  
springs!  
'Tis surely one of the blessedest things  
That nature ever invented!  
When the rich are wealthy beyond their  
wealth,  
And the poor are rich in spirits and health,  
And all with their lots contented!

There's little Phelim, he sings like a  
thrush,  
In the selfsame pair of patchwork plush,  
With the selfsame empty pockets,  
That tempted his daddy so often to cut  
His throat, or jump in the water-butt—  
But what cares Phelim? an empty nut  
Would sooner bring tears to their sockets.

## *AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

Give him a collar without a skirt,  
(That's the Irish linen for shirt)  
And a slice of bread with a taste of dirt,  
(That's Poverty's Irish butter).  
And what does he lack to make him blest?  
Some oyster-shells, or a sparrow's nest,  
A candle-end, and a gutter.

But to leave the happy Phelim alone,  
Gnawing, perchance, a marrowless bone,  
For which no dog would quarrel—  
Turn we to little Miss Kilmansegg,  
Cutting her first little toothy-peg  
With a fifty-guinea coral—  
A peg upon which  
About poor and rich  
Reflection might hang a moral.

Born in wealth and wealhtily nursed,  
Capp'd, papp'd, napp'd, and lapp'd from  
the first

On the knees of Prodigality.  
Her childhood was one eternal round  
Of the game of going on Tidler's ground,  
Picking up gold—in reality.

With extempore carts she never play'd,  
Or the odds and ends of a Tinker's trade,  
Or little dirt pies and puddings made,  
Like children happy and squalid;



MISS KILMANSEGG

The very puppet she had to pet,  
Like a bait for the "Nix my Dolly" set,  
Was a Dolly of gold—and solid!

Gold! and gold! 't was the burden still!  
To gain the Heiress's early good-will  
There was much corruption and bribery—  
The yearly cost of her golden toys  
Would have given half London's Charity  
Boys  
And Charity Girls the annual joys  
Of a holiday dinner at Highbury.

Bon-bons she ate from the gilt *cornet*;  
And gilded queens on St. Bartlemy's day;  
Till her fancy was tinged by her presents—  
And first a Goldfinch excited her wish,  
Then a spherical bowl with its Golden fish,  
And then two Golden Pheasants.

Nay, once she squall'd and scream'd like  
wild—  
And it shows how the bias we give to a  
child  
Is a thing most weighty and solemn;—  
But whence was wonder or blame to spring  
If little Miss K.,—after such a swing—  
Made a dust for the flaming gilded thing  
On the top of the Fish Street column?

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

### HER EDUCATION

According to metaphysical creed,  
To the earliest books that children read  
For much good or much bad they are  
debtors;

But before with their A B C they start,  
There are things in morals as well as art,  
That play a very important part—  
“Impressions before the letters”.

Dame Education begins the pile,  
Mayhap in the graceful Corinthian style,  
But alas for the elevation!  
If the Lady's maid or Gossip the Nurse  
With a load of rubbish, or something worse,  
Have made a rotten foundation.

Even thus with little Miss Kilmansegg,  
Before she learnt her E for egg,  
Ere her Governess came, or her Masters—  
Teachers of quite a different kind  
Had “cramm'd” her beforehand, and put  
her mind  
In a go-cart on golden castors.

Long before her A B and C,  
They had taught her by heart her L. S. D.,  
And as how she was born a great Heiress;  
And as sure as London is built of bricks,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

My Lord would ask her the day to fix,  
To ride in a fine gilt coach and six,  
Like her Worship the Lady May'ress.

Instead of stories from Edgeworth's page,  
The true golden lore for our golden age,  
Or lessons from Barbauld and Trimmer,  
Teaching the worth of Virtue and Health,  
All that she knew was the Virtue of Wealth,  
Provided by vulgar nursery stealth  
With a Book of Leaf Gold for a Primer.

The very metal of merit they told,  
And praised her for being as "good as  
gold!"

Till she grew as a peacock haughty;  
Of money they talked the whole day round,  
And weigh'd desert like grapes by the pound,  
Till she had an idea from the very sound  
That people with naught were naughty.

They praised—poor children with nothing  
at all!

Lord! how you twaddle and waddle and  
squall,

Like common-bred geese and ganders!  
What sad little bad little figures you make  
To the rich Miss K., whose plainest seed-  
cake

Was stuff'd with corianders!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

They prais'd her falls, as well as her walk.  
Flatterers make cream cheese of chalk,  
They prais'd—how they prais'd—her very  
small talk,

As if it fell from a Solon;  
Or the girl who at each pretty phrase let  
drop  
A ruby comma, a pearl full-stop,  
Or an emerald semicolon.

They prais'd her spirit, and now and then,  
The Nurse brought her own little "nevy"  
Ben,

To play with the future May'ress,  
And when he got raps, and taps, and slaps,  
Scratches, and pinches, snips, and snaps,  
As if from a Tigress, or Bearess,  
They told him how lords would court that  
hand,

And always gave him to understand,  
While he rubbed, poor soul!  
His carrotty poll,  
That his hair had been pulled by "a  
*Hairess*".

Such were the lessons from maid and  
nurse,  
A Governess helped to make still worse,  
Giving an appetite so perverse



## MISS KILMANSEGG

Fresh diet whereon to batten—  
Beginning with A B C to hold  
Like a royal play-bill printed in gold  
On a square of pearl-white satin.

The books to teach the verbs and nouns,  
And those about countries, cities, and  
towns,  
Instead of their sober drabs and browns,  
Were in crimson silk, with gilt edges;—  
Her Butler and Enfield and Entick—in  
short  
Her "Early Lessons" of every sort,  
Looked like Souvenirs, Keepsakes, and  
Pledges.

Old Johnson shone out in as fine array  
As he did one night when he went to the  
play;  
Cham baud like a beau of King Charles's  
day—

Lindley Murray in like conditions—  
Each weary, unwelcome, irksome task,  
Appear'd in a fancy dress and a mask;—  
If you wish for similar copies, ask  
For Howell and James's Editions.

Novels she read to amuse her mind,  
But always the affluent match-making  
kind

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

That ends with Promessi Sposi,  
And a father-in-law so wealthy and grand,  
He could give cheque-mate to Coutts in the  
Strand;

So, along with a ring and posy,  
He endows the Bride with Golconda off-  
hand,  
And gives the Groom Potosi.

Plays she perused—but she liked the best  
Those comedy gentlefolks always possessed  
Of fortunes so truly romantic—  
Of money so ready that right or wrong  
It always is ready to go for a song,  
Throwing it, going it, pitching it strong—  
They ought to have purses as green and long  
As the cucumber called the Gigantic.

Then Eastern Tales she loved for the sake  
Of the Purse of Oriental make,

And the thousand pieces they put in it—  
But pastoral scenes on her heart fell cold,  
For Nature with her had lost its hold,  
No field but the Field of the Cloth of Gold  
Would ever have caught her foot in it.

What more? She learned to sing, and  
dance,  
To sit on a horse, although he should  
prance,

### MISS KILMANSEGG

And to speak a French not spoken in  
France

Any more than at Babel's building—  
And she painted shells, and flowers, and  
Turks,

But her great delight was in Fancy Works  
That are done with gold or gilding.

Gold! still gold!—the bright and the dead,  
With golden beads, and gold lace, and gold  
thread

She work'd in gold, as if for her bread;  
The metal had so undermined her,  
Gold ran in her thoughts, and fill'd her  
brain,

She was golden-headed as Peter's cane  
With which he walked behind her.

### HER ACCIDENT

The horse that carried Miss Kilmansegg,  
And a better never lifted leg,

Was a very rich bay, called Banker—  
A horse of a breed and a mettle so rare,—  
By Bullion out of an Ingot mare,—  
That for action, the best of figures, and air,  
It made many good judges hanker.

And when she took a ride in the Park,  
Equestrian Lord, or pedestrian Clerk,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Was thrown in an amorous fever,  
To see the heiress how well she sat,  
With her groom behind her, Bob or Nat,  
In green, half smother'd with gold, and a  
    hat  
With more gold lace than beaver.

And then when Banker obtained a pat,  
To see how he arch'd his neck at that!  
He snorted with pride and pleasure!  
Like the Steed in the fable so lofty and  
    grand,  
Who gave the poor Ass to understand,  
That *he* didn't carry a bag of sand,  
But a burden of golden treasure.

A load of treasure?—alas! alas!  
Had her horse but been fed upon English  
    grass

And sheltered in Yorkshire spinneys,  
Had he scour'd the sand with the Desert Ass,  
Or where the American whinnies—  
But a hunter from Erin's turf and gorse,  
A regular thorough-bred Irish horse,  
Why, he ran away, as a matter of course,  
With a girl worth her weight in guineas!

Mayhap 'tis the trick of such pamper'd  
    nags  
To shy at the sight of a beggar in rags,—



## MISS KILMANSEGG

But away, like the bolt of a rabbit,—  
Away went the horse in the madness of  
fright,  
And away went the horsewoman mocking  
the sight—  
Was yonder blue flash a flash of blue  
light,  
Or only the skirt of her habit?

Away she flies, with the groom behind,—  
It looks like a race of the Calmuck kind,  
When Hymen himself is the starter,  
And the Maid rides first in the four-footed  
strife,  
Riding, striding, as if for her life,  
While the Lover rides after to catch him  
a wife,  
Although it's catching a Tartar.

But the groom has lost his glittering hat!  
Though he does not sigh and pull up for  
that—  
Alas! his horse is a tit for Tatt,  
To sell to a very low bidder—  
His wind is ruin'd, his shoulder is sprung,  
Things, though a horse be well-bred and  
young,  
A purchaser *will* consider.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

But still flies the heiress through stones  
and dust,

Oh, for a fall, if fall she must,

On the gentle lap of Flora!

But still, thank Heaven! she clings to her  
seat—

Away! away! she could ride a dead heat  
With the Dead who ride so fast and fleet,  
In the Ballad of Leonora!

Away she gallops!—it's awful work!

It's faster than Turpin's ride to York

On Bess, that notable clipper!

She has circled the Ring!—she crosses the  
Park!

Mazeppa, although he was stripped so  
stark,

Mazeppa couldn't outstrip her!

The fields seem running away with the  
folks!

The Elms are having a race for the Oaks!

At a pace that all Jockeys disparages!

All, all is racing! the Serpentine

Seems rushing past like the "arrowy  
Rhine",

The houses have got on a railway line,

And are off like the first-class carriages!

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

She'll lose her life! she is losing her  
breath!

A cruel chase, she is chasing Death,

As female shriekings forewarn her:

And now—as gratis as blood of Guelph—  
She clears that gate, which has cleared  
itself

Since then, at Hyde Park Corner!

Alas! for the hope of the Kilmanseggs!

For her head, her brains, her body, and  
legs,

Her life's not worth a copper!

Willy-nilly,

In Piccadilly,

A hundred hearts turn sick and chilly,

A hundred voices cry, "Stop her!"

And one old gentleman stares and stands,

Shakes his head and lifts his hands,

And says, "How very improper!"

On and on!—what a perilous run!

The iron rails seem all mingling in one,

To shut out the Green Park scenery!

And now the Cellar its dangers reveals,

She shudders—she shrieks—she's doom'd,  
she feels,

To be torn by powers of horses and wheels,

Like a spinner by steam machinery!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Sick with horror she shuts her eyes,  
But the very stones seem uttering cries,  
As they did to that Persian daughter,  
When she climb'd up the steep vociferous  
hill,

Her little silver flagon to fill  
With the magical Golden Water!

"Batter her! shatter her!

Throw and scatter her!"

Shouts each stony-hearted chatterer!

"Dash at the heavy Dover!

Spill her! kill her! tear and tatter her!

Smash her! crash her!" (the stones didn't  
flatter her!)

"Kick her brains out! let her blood spatter  
her!

Roll on her over and over!"

For so she gathered the awful sense  
Of the street in its past unmacadamized  
tense,

As the wild horse overran it,—

His four heels making the clatter of six,  
Like a Devil's tattoo, play'd with iron  
sticks

On a kettle-drum of granite!

On! still on! she's dazzled with hints  
Of oranges, ribbons, and colour'd prints,



## MISS KILMANSEGG

A Kaleidoscope jumble of shapes and tints,  
And human faces all flashing,  
Bright and brief as the sparks from the  
flints,  
That the desperate hoof keeps dashing!

On and on! still frightfully fast!  
Dover-street, Bond-street, all are past!  
But—yes—no—yes!—they're down at last!  
The Furies and Fates have found them!  
Down they go with a sparkle and crash,  
Like a Bark that's struck by the lightning  
flash—

There's a shriek—and a sob—  
And the dense dark mob  
Like a billow closes around them!

“She breathes!”

“She don't!”

“She'll recover!”

“She won't!”

“She's stirring! she's living, by Neme-  
sis!”

Gold, still gold! on counter and shelf!

Golden dishes as plenty as delf!

Miss Kilmansegg's coming again to her-  
self

On an opulent Goldsmith's premises!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Gold! fine gold!—both yellow and red,  
Beaten, and molten—polish'd, and dead—  
To see the gold with profusion spread

In all forms of its manufacture!  
But what avails gold to Miss Kilmansegg,  
When the femoral bone of her dexter leg  
Has met with a compound fracture?

Gold may sooth Adversity's smart;  
Nay, help to bind up a broken heart;  
But to try it on any other part

Were as certain a disappointment,  
As if one should rub the dish and plate,  
Taken out of a Staffordshire crate—  
In the hope of a Golden Service of State—  
With Singleton's "Golden Ointment".

### HER PRECIOUS LEG

"As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined",  
Is an adage often recall'd to mind,

Referring to juvenile bias:  
And never so well is the verity seen,  
As when to the weak, warp'd side we lean,  
While Life's tempests and hurricanes try  
us.

Even thus with Miss K. and her broken  
limb:

By a very, very remarkable whim,

## MISS KILMANSEGG

She show'd her early tuition:  
While the buds of character came into blow  
With a certain tinge that served to show  
The nursery culture long ago,  
As the graft is known by fruition!

For the King's Physician, who nursed the  
case,

His verdict gave with an awful face,  
And three others concurr'd to egg it:  
That the Patient to give old Death the slip,  
Like the Pope, instead of a personal trip,  
Must send her Leg as a Legate.

The limb was doom'd—it couldn't be saved!  
And like other people the patient behaved,  
Nay, bravely that cruel parting braved,  
Which makes some persons so falter,  
They rather would part without a groan,  
With the flesh of their flesh, and bone of  
their bone,  
They obtained at St. George's altar.

But when it came to fitting the stump  
With a proxy limb—then flatly, and plump  
She spoke, in the spirit olden;  
She couldn't—she shouldn't—she wouldn't  
have wood!  
Nor a leg of cork, if she never stood,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And she swore an oath, or something as  
good,  
The proxy limb should be golden!

A wooden leg! what, a sort of peg,  
For your common Jockeys and Jennies.  
No, no, her mother might worry and  
plague—  
Weep, go down on her knees, and beg,  
But nothing would move Miss Kilmansegg!  
She could—she would have a Golden Leg,  
If it cost ten thousand guineas!

Wood indeed, in Forest or Park,  
With its sylvan honours and feudal bark,  
Is an aristocratical article;  
But split and sawn, and hack'd about town,  
Serving all needs of pauper or clown,  
Trod on! staggered on! Wood cut down  
Is vulgar—fibre and particle!

And Cork!—when the noble Cork Tree  
shades  
A lovely group of Castilian maids,  
'Tis a thing for a song or sonnet —  
But cork, as it stops the bottle of gin,  
Or bungs the beer—the *small* beer—in,  
It pierced her heart like a corking-pin,  
To think of standing upon it!



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

A Leg of Gold—solid gold throughout,  
Nothing else, whether slim or stout,  
Should ever support her, God willing!  
She must—she could—she would have her  
whim,

Her father, she turned a deaf ear to him—  
He might kill her—she didn't mind kill-  
ing!

He was welcome to cut off her other limb—  
He might cut her all off with a shilling!

All other promised gifts were in vain,  
Golden Girdle, or Golden Chain,  
She writhed with impatience more than pain,  
And uttered "pshaws!" and "pishes!"  
But a Leg of Gold! as she lay in bed,  
It danced before her—it ran in her head!  
It jump'd with her dearest wishes!

"Gold—gold—gold! Oh, let it be gold!"  
Asleep or awake that tale she told,  
And when she grew delirious:  
Till her parents resolved to grant her wish,  
If they melted down plate, and goblet, and  
dish,  
The case was getting so serious.

So a Leg was made in a comely mould,  
Of Gold, fine virgin glittering gold,  
As solid as man could make it—

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Solid in foot, and calf, and shank,  
A prodigious sum of money it sank;  
In fact 't was a Branch of the family Bank,  
And no easy matter to break it.

All sterling metal—not half-and-half,  
The Goldsmith's mark was stamped on the  
calf—

'T was pure as from Mexican barter!  
And to make it more costly, just over the  
knee—

Where another ligature used to be,  
Was a circle of Jewels, worth shillings to  
see,

A new-fangled Badge of the Garter!

'T was a splendid, brilliant, beautiful Leg,  
Fit for the Court of Scander-Beg,  
That Precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg!

For, thanks to parental bounty,  
Secure from Mortification's touch,  
She stood on a Member that cost as much  
As a Member for all the County!

### HER FAME

To gratify stern ambition's whims,  
What hundreds and thousands of precious  
limbs

On a field of battle we scatter!  
Sever'd by sword, or bullet, or saw,

MISS KILMANSEGG

Off they go, all bleeding and raw,—  
But the public seems to get the lock-jaw,  
So little is said on the matter!

Legs, the tightest that ever were seen,  
The tightest, the lightest, that danc'd on  
the green,

Cutting capers to sweet Kitty Clover;  
Shatter'd, scatter'd, cut, bowl'd down,  
Off they go, worse off for renown,  
A line in the *Times*, or a talk about town,  
Than the leg that a fly runs over!

But the Precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg,  
That gowden, goolden, golden leg,  
Was the theme of all conversation.  
Had it been a Pillar of Church and State,  
Or a prop to support the whole Dead  
Weight,  
It could not have furnish'd more debate  
To the heads and tails of the nation!

East, and west, and north, and south,  
Though useless for either hunger or  
drbuth—

The Leg was in everybody's mouth,  
To use a poetical figure,  
Rumour, in taking her ravenous swim,  
Saw, and seiz'd on the tempting limb,  
Like a shark on the leg of a nigger.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Wilful Murder fell very dead;  
Debates in the House were hardly read;  
In vain the Police reports were fed  
With Irish riots and *rumpuses*—  
The Leg! the Leg! was the great event,  
Through every circle in life it went,  
Like the leg of a pair of compasses.

The last new Novel seem'd tame and flat,  
The Leg, a novelty newer than that,  
Had tripp'd up the heels of Fiction!  
It Burked the very essays of Burke,  
And alas! how Wealth over Wit plays the  
Turk!  
As a regular piece of goldsmith's work,  
Got the better of Goldsmith's diction.

"A leg of gold! what, of solid gold?"  
Cried rich and poor, and young and old,  
And Master and Miss and Madam.  
'Twas the talk of 'Change, the Alley, the  
Bank,  
And with men of scientific rank,  
It made as much stir as the fossil shank  
Of a Lizard coeval with Adam!

Of course with Greenwich and Chelsea  
elves,  
Men who had lost a limb themselves,  
Its interest did not dwindle—



## MISS KILMANSEGG

But Bill, and Ben, and Jack, and Tom  
Could hardly have spun more yarns there-  
from,  
If the leg had been a spindle.

Meanwhile the story went to and fro,  
Till, gathering like the ball of snow,  
By the time it got to Stratford-le-Bow,  
Through Exaggeration's touches,  
The Heiress and Hope of the Kilmanseggs  
Was propped on *two* fine Golden Legs,  
And a pair of Golden Crutches!

Never had leg so great a run!  
'T was tife "go" and the "Kick" thrown  
into one!  
The mode—the new thing under the sun,  
The rage—the fancy—the passion!  
Bonnets were nam'd, and hats were worn,  
*A la* Golden Leg instead of Leghorn,  
And stockings and shoes,  
Of golden hues,  
Took the lead in the walks of fashion!

The Golden Leg had a vast career,  
It was sung and danced—and to show how  
near

Low Folly to lofty approaches,  
Down to society's very dregs,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

The Belles of Wapping wore "Kilman-  
seggs",  
And St. Giles's Beaux sported Golden Legs  
In their pinchbeck pins and brooches!

### HER FIRST STEP

Supposing the Trunk and Limbs of Man  
Shar'd, on the allegorical plan,

By the Passions that mark Humanity,  
Whichever might claim the head, or heart,  
The stomach, or any other part,

The Legs would be seized by Vanity.

There's Bardus, a six-foot column of fop,  
A lighthouse without any light atop,

Whose height would attract beholders,  
If he had not lost some inches clear  
By looking down at his kerseymere,  
Ogling the limbs he holds so dear,

Till he got a stoop in his shoulders.

Talk of Art, of Science, or Books,  
And down go the everlasting looks,

To his crural beauties so wedded!  
Try him, wherever you will, you find  
His mind in his legs, and his legs in his  
mind,

All prongs and folly—in short, a kind  
Of Fork—that is Fiddle-headed.

## MISS KILMANSEGG

What wonder, then, if Miss Kilmansegg,  
With a splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,  
Fit for the Court of Scander-Beg,  
Disdained to hide it, like Joan or Meg,  
In petticoats stuff'd or quilted?  
Not she! 't was her convalescent whim  
To dazzle the world with the precious  
limb,—

Nay, to go a little high-kilted.

So cards were sent for that sort of mob  
Where Tartars and Africans hob-and-nob,  
And the Cherokee talks of his cab and cob  
To Polish or Lapland lovers—  
Cards like that hieroglyphical call  
To a geographical Fancy Ball  
On the recent Post-Office covers.

For if Lion-hunters—and great ones too—  
Would mob a savage from Latakoo,  
Or squeeze for a glimpse of Prince Le Boo,  
That unfortunate Sandwich scion—  
Hundreds of first-rate people, no doubt,  
Would madly, gladly, rush to the rout,  
That promis'd a Golden Lion!

## HER FANCY BALL

Of all the spirits of evil fame  
That hurt the soul or injure the frame,  
And poison what's honest and hearty,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

There's none more needs a Mathew to  
preach

A cooling, antiphlogistic speech,  
To praise and enforce  
A temperate course,  
Than the Evil Spirit of Party.

Go to the House of Commons, or Lords,  
And they seem to be busy with simple words  
In their popular sense or pedantic—  
But, alas! with their cheers, and sneers,  
and jeers,  
They're really busy, whatever appears,  
Putting peas in each other's ears  
To drive their enemies frantic!

Thus Tories like to worry the Whigs,  
Who treat them in turns like Schwalbach  
pigs,  
Giving them lashes, thrashes, and digs,  
With their writhing and pain delighted—  
But after all that's said, and more,  
The malice and spite of Party are poor  
To the malice and spite of a party next  
door,  
To a party not invited.

On with the cap and out with the light,  
Weariness bids the world good-night,  
At least for the usual season;



## MISS KILMANSEGG

But hark! a clatter of horses' heels;  
And Sleep and Silence are broken on  
wheels,  
Like Wilful Murder and Treason!

Another crash—and the carriage goes—  
Again poor Weariness seeks the repose  
That Nature demands imperious;  
But Echo takes up the burden now,  
With a rattling chorus of row-de-dow-dow,  
Till Silence herself seems making a row,  
Like a Quaker gone delirious!

'Tis night—a winter night—and the stars  
Are shining like winkin'—Venus and Mars  
Are rolling along in their golden cars  
Through the sky's serene expansion—  
But vainly the stars dispense their rays,  
Venus and Mars are lost in the blaze  
Of the Kilmanseggs' luminous mansion!

Up jumps Fear in a terrible fright!  
His bedchamber windows look so bright,  
With light all the square is glutted!  
Up he jumps, like a sole from the pan,  
And a tremor sickens his inward man,  
For he feels as only a gentleman can,  
Who thinks he's being "gutted".

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Again Fear settles, all snug and warm;  
But only to dream of a dreadful storm  
From Autumn's sulphurous locker;  
But the only electrical body that falls,  
Wears a negative coat and positive smalls,  
And draws the peal that so appals  
From the Kilmanseggs' brazen knocker!

'Tis Curiosity's Benefit Night—  
And perchance 't is the English Second-  
Sight,

But whatever it be, so be it—  
As the friends and guests of Miss Kil-  
mansegg  
Crowd in to look at her Golden Leg,  
As many more  
Mob round the door,  
To see them going to see it!

In they go—in jackets and cloaks,  
Plumes and bonnets, turbans and toques,  
As if to a Congress of Nations:  
Greeks and Malays, with daggers and dirks,  
Spaniards, Jews, Chinese, and Turks—  
Some like original foreign works,  
But mostly like bad translations.

In they go, and to work like a pack,  
Juan, Moses, and Shacabac,  
Tom, and Jerry, and Springheel'd Jack,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

For some of low Fancy are lovers—  
Skirting, zigzagging, casting about,  
Here and there, and in and out,  
With a crush, and a rush, for a full-bodied  
    rout  
Is one of the stiffest of covers.

In they went, and hunted about,  
Open-mouthed like chub and trout,  
And some with the upper lip thrust out,  
    Like that fish for routing, a barbel—  
While Sir Jacob stood to welcome the  
    crowd,  
And rubbed his hands, and smiled aloud,  
And bow'd, and bow'd, and bow'd, and  
    bow'd,  
Like a man who is sawing marble.

For Princes were there, and noble Peers;  
Dukes descended from Norman spears;  
Earls that dated from early years;  
And Lords in vast variety—  
Besides the Gentry, both new and old—  
For people who stand on legs of gold  
Are sure to stand well with society.

“But where—where—where?” with one  
    accord  
Cried Moses and Mufti, Jack and my Lord,  
Wang-fong and Il Bondocani—

AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

When slow, and heavy, and dead as a  
dump,  
They heard a foot begin to stump,  
Thump! lump!  
Lump! thump!  
Like the Spectre in *Don Giovanni*!

And lo! the Heiress, Miss Kilmansegg,  
With her splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,  
In the garb of a Goddess olden--  
Like chaste Diana going to hunt,  
With a golden spear—which of course was  
blunt,  
And a tunic loop'd up to a gem in front,  
To show the Leg that was Golden!

Gold! still gold! Her Crescent behold,  
That should be silver, but would be gold;  
And her robe's auriferous spangles!  
Her golden stomacher—how she would  
melt!  
Her golden quiver, and golden belt,  
Where a golden bugle dangles!

And her jewelled Garter? Oh, sin! Oh  
shame!  
Let Pride and Vanity bear the blame,  
That bring such blots on female fame  
But to be a true recorder,



## MISS KILMANSEGG

Besides its thin transparent stuff,  
The tunic was looped quite high enough  
To give a glimpse of the Order!

But what have sin or shame to do  
With a golden Leg—and a stout one too?  
Away with all Prudery's panics!  
That the precious metal, by thick and thin,  
Will cover square acres of land or sin,  
Is a fact made plain  
Again and again,  
In Morals as well as Mechanics.

A few, indeed, of her proper sex,  
Who seemed to feel her foot on their necks,  
And feared their charms would meet with  
checks

From so rare and splendid a blazon—  
A few cried "fie!"—and "forward"—and  
"bold!"

And said of the Leg, it might be gold,  
But to them it looked like brazen!

'T was hard, they hinted, for flesh and  
blood,  
Virtue and Beauty, and all that's good,  
To strike to mere dross their top-  
gallants—

But what were Beauty, or Virtue, or Worth,  
Gentle manners, or gentle birth,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Nay, what the most talented head on earth  
To a Leg worth fifty Talents!

But the men sang quite another hymn  
Of glory and praise to the precious Limb—  
Age, sordid Age, admir'd the whim,  
And its indecorum pardon'd—  
While half of the young—ay, more than  
half—

Bowed down and worshipped the Golden  
Calf,  
Like the Jews when their hearts were  
hardened.

A Golden Leg! what fancies it fir'd!  
What golden wishes and hopes inspir'd!  
To give but a mere abridgment—  
What a leg to leg-bail Embarrassment's  
serf!

What a leg for a Leg to take on the turf!  
What a leg for a marching regiment!

A Golden Leg!—whatever Love sings,  
'T was worth a bushel of "Plain Gold  
Rings",

With which the Romantic wheedles.  
'T was worth all the legs in stockings and  
socks—

'T was a leg that might be put in the Stocks,  
N.B.—Not the parish beadle's!

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

And Lady K. nid-nodded her head,  
Lapp'd in a turban fancy-bred,  
Just like a love-apple, huge and red,  
Some Mussul-womanish mystery;  
But whatever she meant  
To represent,  
She talk'd like the Muse of History.

She told how the filial leg was lost;  
And then how much the gold one cost,  
With its weight to a Trojan fraction;  
And how it took off, and how it put on;  
And call'd on Devil, Duke, and Don,  
Mahomet, Moses, and Prester John,  
To notice its beautiful action.

And then of the Leg she went in quest;  
And led it where the light was best;  
And made it lay itself up to rest  
In postures for painters' studies:  
It cost more tricks and trouble by half,  
Than it takes to exhibit a Six-legged Calf  
To a boothful of country Cuddies.

Nor yet did the Heiress herself omit  
The arts that help to make a hit,  
And preserve a prominent station.  
She talk'd and laugh'd far more than her  
share;

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And took a part in "Rich and Rare  
Were the gems she wore"—and the gems  
were there,  
Like a Song with an Illustration.

She even stood up with a Count of France—  
To dance—alas! the measures we dance  
When Vanity plays the Piper!  
Vanity, Vanity, apt to betray,  
And lead all sorts of legs astray,—  
Wood, or metal, or human clay,—  
Since Satan first played the Viper!

But first she doff'd her hunting gear,  
And favour'd Tom Tug with her golden  
spear  
To row with down the river—  
A Bonze had her golden bow to hold;  
A Hermit her belt and bugle of gold;  
And an Abbot her golden quiver.

And then a space was clear'd on the floor,  
And she walked the Minuet de la Cour,  
With all the pomp of a Pompadour;  
But although she began *andante*,  
Conceive the faces of all the Rout,  
When she finished off with a whirligig bout,  
And the Precious Leg stuck stiffly out  
Like the leg of a *Figuranté!*



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

So the courtly dance was goldenly done,  
And golden opinions, of course, it won  
From all different sorts of people—  
Chiming, ding-dong, with flattering phrase,  
In one vociferous peal of praise,  
Like the peal that rings on Royal days  
From Loyalty's parish-steeple.

And yet, had the leg been one of those  
That dance for bread in flesh-colour'd  
hose,  
With Rosina's pastoral bevy,  
The jeers it had met,—the shouts! the  
scoff!  
The cutting advice to "take itself off",  
For sounding but half so heavy.

Had it been a leg like those, perchance,  
That teach little girls and boys to dance,  
To set, poussette, recede, and advance,  
With the steps and figures most proper,—  
Had it hopp'd for a weekly or quarterly  
sum,  
How little of praise or grist would have  
come  
To a mill with such a hopper!

But the Leg was none of those limbs for-  
lorn—  
Bartering capers and hops for corn—

## *AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

That meet with public hisses and scorn,  
Or the morning journal denounces—  
Had it pleas'd to caper from morn till  
• dusk,  
There was all the music of "Money  
Musk"  
In its ponderous bangs and bounces.

But, hark! as slow as the strokes of a  
pump,  
Lump, thump!  
Thump, lump!  
As the Giant of Castle Otranto might  
stump  
To a lower room from an upper—  
Down she goes with a noisy dint,  
For, taking the crimson turban's hint,  
A noble Lord at the Head of the Mint  
Is leading the Leg to supper!

But the supper, alas! must rest untold,  
With its blaze of light and its glitter of  
gold,  
For to paint that scene of glamour,  
It would need the Great Enchanter's  
charm,  
Who waves over Palace, and Cot, and  
Farm,  
An arm like the Goldbeater's Golden Arm  
That wields a Golden Hammer.

MISS KILMANSEGG

He—only *he* could fitly state  
*The Massive Service of Golden Plate,*  
With the proper phrase and expansion—  
The rare selection of *Foreign Wines*—  
The *Alps of Ice* and *Mountains of Pines*,  
The punch in *Oceans* and sugary shrines,  
The *Temple of Taste* from *Gunter's*  
*Designs*—

In short, all that *Wealth* with a *Feast*  
combines,  
In a *Splendid Family Mansion*.

Suffice it each mask'd outlandish guest  
Ate and drank of the very best,  
According to critical conners—  
And then they pledg'd the Hostess and  
Host,

But the Golden Leg was the standing  
toast,

And as somebody swore,  
Walked off with more  
Than its share of the "Hips!" and  
honours!

"Miss Kilmansegg!—  
Full glasses I beg!—  
Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg!"  
And away went the bottle careering!  
Wine in bumpers! and shouts in peals!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Till the Clown didn't know his head from  
his heels,  
The Mussulman's eyes danced two-some  
reels,  
And the Quaker was hoarse with cheer-  
ing!

### HER DREAM

Miss Kilmansegg took off her leg,  
And laid it down like a cribbage-peg,  
For the Rout was done and the riot:  
The Square was hush'd; not a sound was  
heard;  
The sky was grey, and no creature stirr'd,  
Except one little precocious bird,  
That chirp'd—and then was quiet.

So still without,—so still within;—  
It had been a sin  
To drop a pin—  
So intense is silence after a din,  
It seemed like Death's rehearsal!  
To stir the air no eddy came;  
And the taper burnt with as still a flame,  
As to flicker had been a burning shame,  
In a calm so universal.

The time for sleep had come at last;  
And there was the Bed, so soft, so vast,  
Quite a field of Bedfordshire clover;



MISS KILMANSEGG

Softer, cooler, and calmer, no doubt,  
From the piece of work just ravell'd out,  
For one of the pleasures of having a rout,  
Is the pleasure of having it over.

No sordid pallet, or truckle mean,  
Of straw, and rug, and tatters unclean,  
But a splendid, gilded, carved machine,  
That was fit for a Royal Chamber.  
On the top was a gorgeous golden wreath,  
And the damask curtains hung beneath,  
Like clouds of crimson and amber;

Curtains, held up by two little plump  
things,  
With golden bodies and golden wings,—  
Mere fins for such solidities—  
Two Cupids, in short,  
Of the regular sort,  
But the housemaid called them "Cupidi-  
ties".

No patchwork quilt, all seams and scars,  
But velvet, powder'd with golden stars,  
A fit mantle for *Night-Commanders*!  
And the pillow, as white as snow un-  
dimm'd  
And as cool as the pool that the breeze  
has skimm'd,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Was, cased in the finest cambric, and  
trimm'd  
With the costliest lace of Flanders.

And the bed—of the Eider's softest down,  
'Twas a place to revel, to smother, to  
drown

In a bliss inferr'd by the Poet:  
For if Ignorance be indeed a bliss,  
What blessed ignorance equals this,  
To sleep—and not to know it?

Oh, bed! oh, bed! delicious bed!  
That heav'n upon earth to the weary  
head;

But a place that to name would be ill-bred,

To the head with a wakeful trouble—  
'Tis held by such a different lease!  
To one, a place of comfort and peace,  
All stuff'd with the down of stubble geese,  
To another, with only the stubble.

To one, a perfect Halcyon nest.  
All calm, and balm, and quiet, and rest,  
And soft as the fur of the cony—  
To another, so restless for body and head,  
That the bed seems borrow'd from Nettle-  
bed,

And the pillow from Stratford the Stony!

MISS KILMANSEGG

To the happy, a first-class carriage of ease,  
To the land of Nod, or where you please;  
But alas! for the watchers and weepers,  
Who turn, and turn, and turn again,  
But turn, and turn, and turn in vain,  
With an anxious brain,  
And thoughts in a train  
That does not run upon *sleepers!*

Wide awake as the mousing owl,  
Night-hawk, or other nocturnal fowl,—  
But more profitless vigils keeping,—  
Wide awake in the dark they stare,  
Filling with phantoms the vacant air,  
As if that Crook-Back'd Tyrant Care  
Had plotted to kill them sleeping.

And oh! when the blessed diurnal light  
Is quench'd by the providential night,  
To render our slumber more certain!  
Pity, pity the wretches that weep,  
For they must be wretched who cannot  
sleep  
When God himself draws the curtain!

The careful Betty the pillow beats,  
And airs the blankets, and smooths the  
sheets,  
And gives the mattress a shaking—  
But vainly Betty performs her part,

*AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

If a ruffled head and a rumbled heart,  
As well as the couch want making.

There's Morbid, all bile, and verjuice, and  
nerves,

Where other people would make preserves,

He turns his fruits into pickles:

Jealous, envious, and fretful by day,

At night, to his own sharp fancies a prey,

He lies like a hedgehog rolled up the  
wrong way,

Tormenting himself with his prickles.

But a child that bids the world good-  
night

In downright earnest, and cuts it quite—

A Cherub no Art can copy,—

'Tis a perfect picture to see him lie

As if he had supp'd on a dormouse pie

(An ancient classical dish, by the by)

With a sauce of syrup of poppy.

Oh, bed! bed! bed! delicious bed!

That heav'n upon earth to the weary head,

Whether lofty or low its condition!

But instead of putting our plagues on  
shelves,

In our blankets how often we toss our-  
selves,



## MISS KILMANSEGG

Or are tossed by such allegorical elves  
As Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition!

The independent Miss Kilmansegg  
Took off her independent Leg  
And laid it beneath her pillow,  
And then on the bed her frame she cast,  
The time for repose had come at last,  
But long, long after the storm is past  
Rolls the turbid, turbulent billow.

No part she had in vulgar cares  
That belong to common household affairs—  
Nocturnal annoyances such as theirs  
Who lie with a shrewd surmising  
That while they are couchant (a bitter  
cup!)  
Their bread and butter are getting up,  
And the coals—confound them!—are  
rising.

No fear she had her sleep to postpone,  
Like the crippled Widow who weeps alone,  
And cannot make a doze her own,  
For the dread that may hap on the  
morrow,  
The true and Christian reading to baulk,  
A broker will take up her bed and walk,  
By way of curing her sorrow.

*AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

No cause like these she had to bewail:  
But the breath of applause had blown a  
    gale,  
And winds from that quarter seldom fail  
    To cause some human commotion;  
But whenever such breezes coincide  
    With the very spring-tide  
    Of human pride,  
There's no such swell on the ocean!

Peace, and ease, and slumber lost,  
She turn'd, and roll'd, and tumbled, and  
    toss'd,  
    With a tumult that would not settle:  
A common case, indeed, with such  
As have too little, or think too much,  
    Of the precious and glittering metal.

Gold!—she saw at her golden foot  
The Peer whose tree had an olden root,  
The Proud, the Great, the Learned to boot,  
    The handsome, the gay, and the witty—  
The man of Science—of Arms—of Art,  
The man who deals but at Pleasure's mart,  
    And the man who deals in the City.

Gold, still gold—and true to the mould!  
In the very scheme of her dream it told;  
    For, by magical transmutation,

## MISS KILMANSEGG

From her Leg through her body it seem'd  
to go,  
Till, gold above, and gold below,  
She was gold, all gold, from her little gold  
toe  
To her organ of Veneration!

And still she retain'd, through Fancy's art,  
The golden Bow, and the Golden Dart,  
With which she had play'd a Goddess's part  
In her recent glorification.  
And still, like one of the self-same brood,  
On a Plinth of the self-same metal she  
stood  
For the whole world's adoration.

And hymns and incense around her roll'd,  
From Golden Harps and Censers of Gold,—  
For Fancy in dreams is as uncontroll'd  
As a horse without a bridle:  
What wonder, then, from all checks  
exempt,  
If, inspired by the Golden Leg, she dreamt  
She was turn'd to a Golden Idol?

## HER COURTSHIP

When leaving Eden's happy land  
The grieving Angel led by the hand  
Our banish'd Father and Mother,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Forgotten amid their awful doom,  
The tears, the fears, and the future's  
gloom,  
On each brow was a wreath of Paradise  
bloom,  
That our Parents had twined for each  
other.

It was only while sitting like Figures of  
stone,  
For the grieving Angel had skyward flown,  
As they sat, those Two, in the world alone,  
With disconsolate hearts nigh cloven.  
That, scenting the gust of happier hours,  
They look'd around for the precious flowers,  
And lo!—a last relic of Eden's dear bowers—  
The chaplet that love had woven!

And still, when a pair of Lovers meet,  
There's a sweetness in air, unearthly sweet,  
That savours still of that happy retreat  
Where Eve by Adam was courted:  
Whilst the joyous Thrush, and the gentle  
Dove,  
Woo'd their mates in the boughs above,  
And the Serpent, as yet, only sported.

Who hath not felt that breath in the air,  
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,



## MISS KILMANSEGG

A warmth in the light, and a bliss every-  
where,

When young hearts yearn together?  
All sweets below, and all sunny above,  
Oh! there's nothing in life like making  
love,

Save making hay in fine weather!

Who hath not found amongst his flow'rs,  
A blossom too, bright for this world of  
ours,

Like a rose among snows of Sweden?  
But to turn again to Miss Kilmansegg,  
Where must Love have gone to beg,  
If such a thing as a Golden Leg  
Had put its foot in Eden!

And yet—to tell the rigid truth—  
Her favour was sought by Age and  
Youth—

For the prey will find a prowler!  
She was follow'd, flatter'd, courted, ad-  
dress'd,  
Woo'd, and coo'd, and wheedled, and  
press'd,  
By suitors from North, South, East, and  
West,  
Like that Heiress, in song, Tibbie  
Fowler!

## *AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

But, alas! alas! for the Woman's fate,  
Who has from a mob to choose a mate!

'Tis a strange and painful mystery!  
But the more the eggs, the worse the hatch;

The more the fish, the worse the catch;  
The more the sparks, the worse the match;

Is a fact in Woman's history.

Give her between a brace to pick,  
And, mayhap, with luck to help the trick,  
She will take the Faustus, and leave the  
Old Nick—

But her future bliss to baffle,  
Amongst a score let her have a voice,  
And she'll have as little cause to rejoice,  
As if she had won the "Man of her  
choice"

In a matrimonial raffle!

Thus, even thus, with the Heiress and  
Hope,

Fulfilling the adage of too much rope,  
With so ample a competition,  
She chose the least worthy of all the group,  
Just as the vulture makes a stoop,  
And singles out from the herd or troop  
The beast of the worst condition.

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

A Foreign Count,—who came incog.,  
Not under a cloud, but under a fog,  
In a Calais packet's fore-cabin,  
To charm some lady, British-born,  
With his eyes as black as the fruit of  
the thorn,  
And his hooky nose, and his beard half-  
shorn,  
Like a half-converted Rabbin.

And because the Sex confess a charm  
In the man who has slash'd a head or arm,  
Or has been a throat's undoing,  
He was dress'd like one of the glorious  
trade,  
At least when Glory is off the parade,  
With a stock, and a frock, well-trimm'd  
with braid,  
And frogs—that went a-wooing.

Moreover, as Counts are apt to do,  
On the left-hand side of his dark surtout,  
At one of those holes that buttons go  
through  
(To be a precise recorder),  
A ribbon he wore, or rather a scrap,  
About an inch of ribbon mayhap,  
That one of his rivals, a whimsical chap  
Described as his "Retail Order".

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And then—and much it helped his chance—  
He could sing, and play first fiddle, and  
    dance,  
Perform charades, and Proverbs of France—  
    Act the tender, and do the cruel;  
For amongst his other killing parts,  
He had broken a brace of female hearts,  
    And murder'd three men in duel!

Savage at heart,\* and false of tongue,  
Subtle with age, and smooth to the young,  
    Like a snake in his coiling and curling—  
Such was the Count—to give him a niche—  
Who came to court that Heiress rich,  
And knelt at her foot—one needn't say  
    which—  
Besieging her Castle of *Sterling*.

With pray'rs and vows he open'd his  
    trench,  
And plied her with English, Spanish, and  
    French,  
    In phrases the most sentimental.  
And quoted poems in High and Low  
    Dutch,  
With now and then an Italian touch,  
Till she yielded, without resisting much,  
    To homage so Continental.



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

And then the sordid bargain to close,  
With a miniature sketch of his hooky nose,  
And his dear dark eyes, as black as sloes,  
And his beard and whiskers as black as  
those,

The lady's consent he requited—  
And instead of the lock that lovers beg,  
The Count received from Miss Kilman-  
segg

A model in small, of her Precious Leg—  
And so the couple were plighted!

But, oh! the love that gold must crown!  
Better—better, the love of the clown,  
Who admires his lass in her Sunday gown,  
As if all the fairies had dress'd her!  
Whose brain to no crooked thought gives  
birth,

Except that he never will part on earth,  
With his true love's crooked tester!

Alas, for the love that's link'd with gold!  
Better—better a thousand times told—

More honest, happy, and laudable,  
The downright loving of pretty Cis,  
Who wipes her lips, though there's no-  
thing amiss,

And takes a kiss, and gives a kiss,  
In which her heart is audible!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Pretty Cis, so smiling and bright,  
Who loves—as she labours—with all her  
might,

And without any sordid leaven!  
Who blushes as red as haws and hips,  
Down to her very finger-tips,  
For Roger's blue ribbons—to her, like  
strips

Cut out of the azure of Heaven!

## HER MARRIAGE

'Twas morn—a most auspicious one!  
From the Golden East, the Golden Sun  
Came forth his glorious race to run,  
Through clouds of most splendid tinges;  
Clouds that lately slept in shade,  
But now seemed made  
Of gold brocade,  
With magnificent golden fringes.

Gold above, and gold below,  
The earth reflected the golden glow,  
From river, and hill, and valley;  
Gilt by the golden light of morn,  
The Thames—it looked like the Golden  
Horn,  
And the Barge, that carried coal or corn,  
Like Cleopatra's Galley!

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Bright as clusters of Golden-rod,  
Suburban poplars began to nod,  
    With extempore splendour furnished;  
While London was bright with glittering  
    clocks,  
Golden dragons, and Golden cocks,  
    And above them all,  
    The dome of St. Paul,  
With its Golden Cross and its Golden Ball,  
    Shone out as if newly burnish'd!

And lo! for Golden Hours and Joys,  
Troops of glittering Golden Boys  
Danced along with a jocund noise,  
    And their gilded emblems carried!  
In short, 'twas the year's most Golden  
    Day,  
By mortals called the First of May,  
    When Miss Kilmansegg,  
    Of the Golden Leg,  
With a Golden Ring was married!

And thousands of children, women, and  
    men,  
Counted the clock from eight till ten,  
    From St. James's sonorous steeple;  
For next to that interesting job,  
The hanging of Jack, or Bill, or Bob,  
There's nothing so draws a London mob  
    As the noosing of very rich people.

AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And a treat it was for a mob to behold  
The bridal carriage that blazed with gold!  
And the Footmen tall, and the Coachman  
bold,

In liveries so resplendent—  
Coats you wonder'd to see in place,  
They seemed so rich with golden lace,  
That they might have been independent.

Coats that made those menials proud,  
Gaze with scorn on the dingy crowd,  
From their gilded elevations;  
Not to forget that saucy lad  
(Ostentation's favourite cad),  
The page, who looked so splendidly clad,  
Like a page of the *Wealth of Nations*.

But the coachman carried off the state,  
With what was a Lancashire body of late  
Turned into a Dresden Figure;  
With a bridal Nosegay of early bloom,  
About the size of a birchen broom,  
And so huge a White Favour, had Gog  
been Groom  
He need not have worn a bigger.

And then to see the Groom!, the Count!  
With Foreign Orders to such an amount,  
And whiskers so wild—nay, bestial;



MISS KILMANSEGG

He seem'd to have borrow'd the shaggy  
hair

As well as the Stars of the Polar Bear,  
To make him look celestial!

And then—Great Jove!—the struggle, the  
crush,

The screams, the heaving, the awful rush,  
The swearing, the tearing, and fight-  
ing,—

The hats and bonnets smash'd like an  
egg—

To catch a glimpse of the Golden Leg,  
Which, between the steps and Miss Kil-  
mansegg,

Was fully display'd in alighting!

From the Golden Ankle up to the Knee,  
There it was for the mob to see!

A shocking act had it chanced to be

A crooked leg or a skinny:

But although a magnificent veil she wore,  
Such as never was seen before,

In case of blushes, she blushed no more  
Than George the First on a guinea!

Another step, and lo! she was launch'd!  
All in white, as Brides are *blanch'd*,

With a wreath of most wonderful  
splendour—

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Diamonds, and pearls, so rich in device,  
That, according to calculation nice,  
Her head was worth as royal a price  
As the head of the Young Pretender.

Bravely she shone—and shone the more  
As she sailed through the crowd of  
squalid and poor,

Thief, beggar, and tatterdemalion—  
Led by the Count, with his sloe-black eyes,  
Bright with triumph, and some surprise,  
Like Anson, on making sure of his Prize,  
The famous Mexican Galleon!

Anon, came Lady K., with her face  
Quite made up to act with grace,  
But she cut the performance shorter;  
For instead of pacing stately and stiff,  
At the stare of the vulgar she took a miff,  
And ran, full speed, into Church, as if  
To get married before her daughter.

But Sir Jacob walk'd more slowly, and  
bow'd  
Right and left to the gaping crowd,  
Wherever a glance was seizable:  
For Sir Jacob thought he bow'd like a  
Guelph,  
And therefore bow'd to imp and elf,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

And would gladly have made a bow to  
himself,  
Had such a bow been feasible.

And last—and not the least of the sight,  
Six "Handsome Fortunes", all in white,  
Came to help in the marriage rite,—  
And rehearse their own hymeneals;  
And then the bright procession to close  
They were followed by just as many Beaux  
Quite fine enough for Ideals.

Glittering men, and splendid dames,  
Thus they enter'd the porch of St. James,  
Pursued by a thunder of laughter;  
For the Beadle was forced to intervene,  
For Jim the Crow, and his Mayday Queen,  
With her gilded ladle, and Jack i' the  
Green,  
Would fain have follow'd after!

Beadle-like he hushed the shout;  
But the temple was full "inside and out",  
And a buzz kept buzzing all round about  
Like bees when the day is sunny—  
A buzz universal that interfered  
With the rite that ought to have been  
revered,  
As if the couple already were smeared  
With Wedlock's treacle and honey!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Yet Wedlock's a very awful thing!  
'Tis something like that feat in the ring,  
Which requires good nerve to do it—  
When one of a "Grand Equestrian Troop"  
Makes a jump at a gilded hoop,  
Not certain at all  
Of what may befall  
After his getting through it!

But the Count he felt the nervous work  
No more than any polygamous Turk,  
Or bold piratical skipper,  
Who, during his buccaneering search,  
Would as soon engage "a hand" in church  
As a hand on board his clipper!

And how did the Bride perform her part?  
Like any Bride who is cold at heart,—  
Mere snow with the ice's glitter;  
What but a life of winter for her!  
Bright but chilly, alive without stir,  
So splendidly comfortless,—just like a Fir  
When the frost is severe and bitter.

Such were the future man and wife!  
Whose bale or bliss to the end of life  
A few short words were to settle—  
Wilt thou have this woman?  
I will—and then,



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Wilt thou have this man?  
I will, and Amen—  
And those Two were one Flesh, in the  
Angels' ken,  
Except one Leg—that was metal.

Then the names were sign'd—and kiss'd  
the kiss:  
And the Bride, who came from her coach  
a Miss,  
As a Countess walked to her carriage—  
Whilst Hymen preen'd his plumes like a  
dove,  
And Cupid flutter'd his wings above  
In the shape of a fly,—as little a Love  
As ever look'd in at a marriage!

Another crash—and away they dash'd,  
And the gilded carriage and footmen flash'd  
From the eyes of the gaping people—  
Who turn'd to gaze at the toe-and-heel  
Of the Golden Boys beginning a reel,  
To the merry sound of a wedding-peal  
From St. James's musical steeple.

Those wedding bells! those wedding bells!  
How sweetly they sound in pastoral dells  
From a tow'r in an ivy-green jacket!  
But town-made joys how dearly they cost;  
And after all are tumbled and tost,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Like a peal from a London steeple, and lost  
In town-made riot and racket.

The wedding-peal, how sweetly it peals  
With grass or heather beneath our heels,—

For bells are Music's laughter!—  
But a London peal, well mingled, be sure,  
With vulgar noises and voices impure,—  
What a harsh and discordant overture  
To the Harmony meant to come after!

But hence with Discord—perchance, too  
soon

To cloud the face of the honeymoon

With a dismal occultation!—

Whatever Fate's concerted trick,

The Countess and Count, at the present  
nick,

Have a chicken and not a crow, to pick  
At a sumptuous Cold Collation.

A Breakfast—no unsubstantial mess,

But one in the style of Good Queen Bess,

Who,—hearty as hippocampus,—

Broke her fast with ale and beef,

Instead of toast and the Chinese leaf,

And—in lieu of anchovy—grampus.

A breakfast of fowl, and fish, and flesh,

Whatever was sweet, or salt, or fresh;

MISS KILMANSEGG

With wines the most rare and curious—  
Wines of the richest flavour and hue;  
With fruits from the worlds, both Old and  
New;  
And fruits obtained before they were due  
At a discount most usurious.

For wealthy palates there be, that scout  
What is *in* season, for what is *out*,  
And prefer all precocious savour:  
For instance, early green peas, of the sort  
That costs some four or five guineas a quart;  
Where the *Mint* is the principal flavour.

And many a wealthy man was there,  
Such as the wealthy City could spare,  
To put in a portly appearance—  
Men, whom their fathers had help'd to gild;  
And men who had their fortunes to build,  
And—much to their credit—had richly fill'd  
Their purses by *pursy-verance*.

Men, by popular rumour at least,  
Not the last to enjoy a feast!  
And truly they were not idle!  
Luckier far than the chestnut tits,  
Which, down at the door, stood champing  
their bits,  
At a different sort of *bridal*.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

For the time was come and the whisker'd  
Count  
Help'd his Bride in the carriage to mount,  
And fain would the Muse deny it,  
But the crowd, including two Butchers in  
blue,  
(The regular killing Whitechapel hue),  
Of her Precious Calf had as ample a view,  
As if they had come to buy it!

Then away! away! with all the speed  
That golden spurs can give to the steed,—  
Both Yellow Boys and Guineas, indeed,  
Concurred to urge the cattle—  
Away they went, with favours white,  
Yellow jackets, and panels bright,  
And left the mob, like a mob at night,  
Agape at the sound of a rattle.

Away! away! they rattled and roll'd,  
The Count, and his Bride, and her Leg of  
Gold—

That fated charm to the charmer!  
Away,—through Old Brentford rang the  
din

Of wheels and heels, on their way to win  
That hill, named after one of her kin,  
The hill of the Golden Farmer!



## MISS KILMANSEGG

Gold, still gold—it flew like dust!  
It tipp'd the post-boy, and paid the trust;  
In each open palm it was freely thrust;  
There was nothing but giving and taking!  
And if gold could ensure the future hour,  
What hopes attended that Bride to her  
bow'r,  
But alas! even hearts with a four-horse  
pow'r  
Of opulence end in breaking!

## HER HONEYMOON

The moon—the moon, so silver and cold,  
Her fickle temper has oft been told,  
Now shady—now bright and sunny—  
But of all the lunar things that change,  
The one that shows most fickle and  
strange,  
And takes the most eccentric range,  
Is the moon—so called—of honey!

To some a full-grown orb reveal'd,  
As big and as round as Norval's shield,  
And as bright as a burner Bude-lighted;  
To others as dull, and dingy, and damp  
As any oleaginous lamp,  
Of the regular old parochial stamp,  
In a London fog benighted.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

To the loving, a bright and constant sphere,  
That makes earth's commonest things appear

All poetic, romantic, and tender:  
Hanging with jewels a cabbage stump,  
And investing a common post, or a pump,  
A currant-bush, or a gooseberry clump,  
With a halo of dreamlike splendour.

A sphere such as shone from Italian skies,  
In Juliet's dear, dark, liquid eyes,

Tipping trees with its argent braveries—  
And to couples not favour'd with Fortune's  
boons

One of the most delightful of moons,  
For it brightens their pewter platters and  
spoons

Like a silver service of Savory's!

For all is bright, and beauteous, and clear,  
And the meanest thing most precious and  
dear

When the magic of love is present:  
Love, that lends a sweetness and grace  
To the humblest spot and the plainest  
face—

That turns Wilderness Row into Paradise  
Place,

And Garlick Hill to Mount Pleasant!

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Love that sweetens sugarless tea,  
And makes contentment and joy agree  
With the coarsest boarding and bedding:  
Love, that no golden ties can attach,  
But nestles under the humblest thatch,  
And will fly away from an Emperor's  
match  
To dance at a penny wedding!

O, happy, happy, thrice happy state,  
When such a bright Planet governs the  
fate  
Of a pair of united lovers!  
'Tis theirs, in spite of the Serpent's hiss,  
To enjoy the pure primeval kiss,  
With as much of the old original bliss  
As mortality ever recovers!

There's strength in double joints, no doubt,  
In double X Ale, and Dublin Stout,  
That the single sorts know nothing about—  
And a fist is strongest when doubled—  
And double aqua-fortis, of course,  
And double soda-water, perforce,  
Are the strongest that ever bubbled!

There's double beauty whenever a Swan  
Swims on a lake, with her double thereon;  
And ask the gardener, Luke or John,

## *AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

Of the beauty of double-blowing—  
A double dahlia delights the eye:  
And it's far the loveliest sight in the sky  
When a double rainbow is glowing!

There's warmth in a pair of double soles  
As well as a double allowance of coals—  
In a coat that is double-breasted—  
In double windows and double doors;  
And a double U wind is blest by scores  
For its warmth to the tender-chested.

There's a twofold sweetness in double  
pipes;  
And a double-barrel and double snipes  
Give the sportsman a duplicate pleasure:  
There's double safety in double locks;  
And double letters bring cash for the box;  
And all the world knows that double  
knocks  
Are gentility's double measure.

There's a double sweetness in double  
rhymes,  
And a double at Whist, and a double Times  
In profit are certainly double—  
By doubling, the Hare contrives to escape;  
And all seamen delight in a doubled Cape,  
And a double-reefed topsail in trouble.



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

There's a double chuck at a double chin,  
And of course there's a double pleasure  
therein,

If the parties were brought to telling:  
And however our Dennises take offence,  
A double meaning shows double sense;

And if proverbs tell truth,

A double tooth

Is Wisdom's adopted dwelling!

But double wisdom, and pleasure, and  
sense,

Beauty, respect, strength, comfort, and  
thence

Through whatever the list discovers,  
They are all in the double blessedness  
summ'd,

Of what was formerly double-drumm'd,

The Marriage of two true Lovers!

Now the Kilmansegg Moon—it must be  
told—

Though instead of silver it tipp'd with  
gold—

Shone rather wan, and distant, and cold,

And before its days were at thirty,

Such gloomy clouds began to collect,

With an ominous ring of ill effect,

As gave but too much cause to expect

Such weather as seamen call dirty!

*AND HER PRECIOUS\* LEG*

And yet the moon was the "Young May  
Moon",  
And the scented hawthorn had blossom'd  
soon,  
And the thrush and the blackbird were  
singing—  
The snow-white lambs were skipping in  
play,  
And the bee was humming a tune all day  
To flowers, as welcome as flowers in May,  
And the Trout in the stream was spring-  
ing!

But what were the hues of the blooming  
earth,  
Its scents—its sounds—or the music and  
mirth  
Of its furr'd or its feather'd creatures,  
To a Pair in the world's last sordid stage,  
Who had never look'd into Nature's page,  
And had strange ideas of a Golden Age,  
Without any Arcadian features?

And what were joys of the pastoral kind  
To a Bride—town-made—with a heart and  
a mind  
With simplicity ever at battle?  
A bride of an ostentatious race,  
Who, thrown in the Golden Farmer's  
place,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Would have trimm'd her shepherds with  
golden lace,  
And gilt the horns of her cattle.

She could not please the pigs with her  
whim,  
And the sheep wouldn't cast their eyes at  
a limb

For which she had been such a martyr;  
The deer in the park, and the colts at  
grass,

And the cows unheeded let it pass;  
And the ass on the common was such an  
ass,

That he wouldn't have swapp'd  
The thistle he cropp'd  
For her Leg, including the Garter!

She hated lanes and she hated fields—  
She hated all that the country yields—  
And barely knew turnips from clover;  
She hated walking in any shape,  
And a country stile was an awkward  
scrape,

Without the bribe of a mob to gape  
At the Leg in clambering over!

O' blessed nature, "O rus! O rus!"  
Who cannot sigh for the country thus,  
Absorbed in a worldly torpor—

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Who does not yearn for its meadow-sweet  
breath,

Untainted by care, and crime, and death,  
And to stand sometimes upon grass or  
heath—

That soul, spite of gold, is a pauper!

But to hail the pearly advent of morn,  
And relish the odour fresh from the thorn,

She was far too pamper'd a madam—  
Or to joy in the daylight waxing strong,  
While, after ages of sorrow and wrong,  
The scorn of the proud, the misrule of the  
strong,

And all the woes that to man belong,  
The Lark still carols the self-same song  
That he did to the uncurst Adam!

The Lark!—she had given all Leipzig's  
flocks

For a Vauxhall tune in a musical box;

And as for the birds in the thicket,  
Thrush or ouzel in leafy niche,  
The linnet or finch, she was far too rich  
To care for a Morning concert, to which  
She was welcome without any ticket.

Gold, still gold, her standard of old,  
All pastoral joys were tried by gold,  
Or by fancies golden and crural—



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Till ere she had pass'd one week unblest,  
As her agricultural Uncle's guest,  
Her mind was made up and fully imprest  
That felicity could not be rural!

And the Count?—to the snow-white lambs  
at play,  
And all the scents and the sights of May,  
And the birds that warbled their passion,  
His ears, and dark eyes, and decided nose,  
Were as deaf and as blind and as dull as  
those  
That overlook the Bouquet de Rose,  
The Huile Antique,  
And Parfum Unique,  
In a Barber's Temple of Fashion.

To tell, indeed, the true extent  
Of his rural bias, so far it went  
As to covet estates in ring-fences—  
And for rural lore he had learn'd in town  
That the country was green, turn'd up  
with brown,  
And garnish'd with trees that a man  
might cut down  
Instead of his own expenses.

And yet had that fault been his only one,  
The Pair might have had few quarrels or  
none,

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

For their tastes thus far were in  
common;  
But faults he had, that a haughty bride  
With a Golden Leg could hardly abide—  
Faults that would even have roused the  
pride  
Of a far less metalsome woman!

It was early days indeed for a wife,  
In the very spring of her married life,  
To be chill'd by its wintry weather—  
But instead of sitting as Love-Birds do,  
Or Hymen's turtles that bill and coo,  
Enjoying their "moon and honey for  
two",

They were scarcely seen together!

In vain she sat with her Precious Leg,  
A little exposed, *à la* Kilmansegg,

And rolled her eyes in their sockets!  
He left her in spite of her tender regards,  
And those loving murmurs describ'd by  
bards,

For the rattling of dice and the shuffling  
of cards,

And the poking of balls into pockets!

Moreover he lov'd the deepest stake  
And the heaviest bets the players would  
make;

MISS KILMANSEGG

And he drank—the reverse of sparely,—  
And he used strange curses that made  
her fret;  
And when he played with herself at piquet,  
She found, to her cost,  
For she always lost,  
That the Count did not count quite  
fairly.

And then came dark mistrust and doubt,  
Gathered by worming his secrets out,  
And slips in his conversations—  
Fears, which all her peace destroy'd,  
That his title was null—his coffers were  
void—  
And his French Château was in Spain,  
or enjoy'd  
The most airy of situations.

But still his heart—if he had such a part—  
She—only she—might possess his heart,  
And hold his affections in fetters—  
Alas! that Hope, like a crazy ship,  
Was forced its anchor and cable to slip  
When, seduced by her fears, she took a dip  
In his private papers and letters.

Letters that told of dangerous leagues;  
And notes that hinted as many intrigues  
As the Count's in the *Barber of Seville*—

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

In short such mysteries came to light,  
That the Countess-Bride, on the thirtieth  
    night,  
Woke and started up in affright,  
And kick'd and scream'd with all her  
    might,  
And finally fainted away outright,  
For she dreamt she had married the  
    Devil!

### HER MISERY

Who hath not met with home-made bread,  
A heavy compound of putty and lead—  
And home-made wines that rack the head,  
And home-made liqueurs and waters?  
Home-made pop that will not foam,  
And home-made dishes that drive one  
    from home,  
Not to name each mess,  
For the face or dress,  
Home-made by the homely daughters?

Home-made physic that sickens the sick;  
Thick for thin and thin for thick;—  
In short each homogeneous trick  
For poisoning domesticity?  
And since our Parents, called the First,  
A little family squabble nurst,  
Of all our evils the worst of the worst  
Is home-made infelicity.



## MISS KILMANSEGG

There's a Golden Bird that claps its  
wings,  
And dances for joy on its perch, and sings  
With a Persian exaltation:  
For the Sun is shining into the room,  
And brightens up the carpet-bloom,  
As if it were new, bran new from the  
loom,  
Or the lone Nun's fabrication.

And thence the glorious radiance flames  
On pictures in massy gilded frames—  
Enshrining, however, no painted Dames,  
But portraits of colts and fillies—  
Pictures hanging on walls which shine,  
In spite of the bard's familiar line,  
With clusters of "gilded lilies".

And still the flooding sunlight shares  
Its lustre with gilded sofas and chairs,  
That shine as if freshly burnish'd—  
And gilded tables, with glittering stocks  
Of gilded china, and golden clocks,  
Toy, and trinket, and musical box,  
That Peace and Paris have furnished.

And lo! with the brightest gleam of all,  
The glowing sunbeam is seen to fall  
On an object as rare as splendid—  
The golden foot of the Golden Leg.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

Of the Countess—once Miss Kilmansegg—  
But there all sunshine is ended.

Her cheek is pale, and her eye is dim,  
And downward cast, yet not at the limb,  
Once the centre of all speculation;  
But downward drooping in comfort's  
dearth,  
As gloomy thoughts are drawn to the  
earth—  
Whence human sorrows derive their birth—  
By a moral gravitation.

Her golden hair is out of its braids,  
And her sighs betray the gloomy shades  
That her evil planet revolves in—  
And tears are falling that catch a gleam  
So bright as they drop in the sunny beam,  
That tears of *aqua regia* they seem,  
The water that Gold dissolves in!

Yet, not in filial grief were shed  
Those tears for a mother's insanity;  
Nor yet because her father was dead,  
For the bowing Sir Jacob had bow'd his  
head  
To Death—with his usual urbanity;  
The waters that down her visage rill'd  
Were drops of unrectified spirit distill'd  
From the limbeck of Pride and Vanity.

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Tears that fell alone and unchecked,  
Without relief, and without respect,  
Like the fabled pearls that the pigs  
neglect,

When pigs have that opportunity—  
And of all the griefs that mortals share,  
The one that seems the hardest to bear  
Is the grief without community.

How blessed the heart that has a friend  
A sympathizing ear to lend

To troubles too great to smother!  
For as ale and porter, when flat, are  
restored,  
Till a sparkling, bubbling head they  
afford,

So sorrow is cheer'd by being pour'd  
From one vessel into another.

But friend or gossip she had not one  
To hear the vile deeds that the Count  
had done,

How night after night he rambled;  
And how she learn'd by sad degrees,  
That he drank, and smok'd, and worse  
than these,

That he "swindled, intrigued, and  
gambled".

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

How he kiss'd the maids, and sparr'd  
with John;  
And came to bed with his garments on;  
With other offences as heinous—  
And brought *strange* gentlemen home to  
dine,  
That he said were in the Fancy Line,  
And they fancied spirits instead of wine,  
And called her lap-dog "Wenus".

Of "making a book", how he made a  
stir,  
But never had written a line to her,  
Once his idol and Cara Sposa:  
And how he had storm'd, and treated her  
ill,  
Because she refus'd to go down to a mill,  
She didn't know where, but remember'd  
still  
That the Miller's name was Mendoza.

How often he waked her up at night,  
And oftener still by the morning light,  
Reeling home from his haunts un-  
lawful;  
Singing songs that shouldn't be sung,  
Except by beggars and thieves un-  
hung—  
Or volleying oaths, that a foreign tongue  
Made still more horrid and awful!



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

How oft, instead of otto of rose,  
With vulgar smells he offended her nose,  
From gin, tobacco, and onion!  
And then how wildly he used to stare!  
And shake his fist at nothing, and swear,—  
And pluck by the handful his shaggy  
hair,  
Till he looked like a study of Giant  
Despair

For a new Edition of Bunyan!

For dice will run the contrary way,  
As well is known to all who play,  
And cards will conspire as in treason:  
And what with keeping a hunting-box,  
Following fox—  
Friends in flocks,  
Burgundies, Hocks,  
From London Docks;  
Stultz's frocks,  
Manton and Nock's  
Barrels and locks,  
Shooting blue rocks,  
Trainers and jocks,  
Buskins and socks,  
Pugilistical knocks,  
And fighting-cocks,

If he found himself short in funds and  
stocks,

These rhymes will furnish the reason!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

His friends, indeed, were falling away—  
Friends who insist on play or pay—  
And he fear'd at no very distant day  
To be cut by Lord and by cadger,  
As one who has gone, or is going to  
smash,

For his cheques no longer drew the cash,  
Because, as his comrades explain'd in  
flash,

"He had overdrawn his badger".

Gold, gold—alas! for the gold  
Spent where souls are bought and sold,  
In Vice's Walpurgis revel!

Alas! for muffles, and bull-dogs, and  
guns,

The leg that walks, and the leg that  
runs,

All real evils, though Fancy ones,  
When they lead to debt, dishonour, and  
duns,

Nay, to death, and perchance the  
Devil!

Alas! for the last of a Golden race!  
Had she cried her wrongs in the market-  
place,

She had warrant for all her clamour—  
For the worst of rogues, and brutes, and  
rakes,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Was breaking her heart by constant  
aches,  
With as little remorse as the pauper who  
breaks  
A flint with a parish hammer!

HER LAST WILL

Now the Precious Leg, while cash was  
flush,  
Or the Count's acceptance worth a rush,  
Had never excited dissension;  
But no sooner the stocks began to fall,  
Than, without any ossification at all,  
The limb became what people call  
A perfect bone of contention.

For alter'd days brought alter'd ways,  
And instead of the complimentary phrase,  
So current before her bridal—  
The Countess heard, in language low,  
That her Precious Leg was precious slow,  
A good 'un to look at but bad to go,  
And kept quite a sum lying idle.

But instead of playing musical airs,  
Like Colin's foot in going upstairs—  
As the wife in the Scottish ballad declares—

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

It made an infernal stumping.  
Whereas a member of cork or wood,  
Would be lighter and cheaper, and quite as  
good,  
Without the unbearable thumping.

P'r'aps she thought it a decent thing,  
To show her calf to cobbler and king,  
But nothing could be absurder—  
While none but the crazy would advertise  
Their gold before their servants' eyes,  
Who of course some night would make it  
a prize,  
By a Shocking and Barbarous Murder.

But spite of hint, and threat, and scoff,  
The Leg kept its situation:  
For legs are not to be taken off  
By a verbal amputation.

And mortals when they take a whim,  
The greater the folly the stiffer the limb  
That stands upon it or by it—  
So the Countess, then Miss Kilmansegg,  
At her marriage refused to stir a peg,  
Till the Lawyers had fastened on her  
Leg,  
As fast as the Law could tie it.



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Firmly then—and more firmly yet—  
With scorn for scorn, and with threat for  
threat,

The Proud One confronted the Cruel:  
And loud and bitter the quarrel arose,  
Fierce and merciless—one of those,  
With spoken daggers, and looks like  
blows,

In all but the bloodshed a duel!

Rash, and wild, and wretched, and wrong,  
Were the words that came from Weak and  
Strong,

Till madden'd for desperate matters,  
Fierce as a tigress escap'd from her den,  
She flew to her desk—'t was opened—and  
then,

In the time it takes to try a pen,  
Or the clerk to utter his slow Amen,  
Her Will was in fifty tatters!

But the Count, instead of curses wild,  
Only nodded his head and smil'd,  
As if at the spleen of an angry child;

But the calm was deceitful and sinister!  
A lull like the lull of the treacherous  
sea—

For Hate in that moment had sworn  
to be

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

The Golden Leg's sole Legatee,  
And that very night to administer!

### HER DEATH

'Tis a stern and startling thing to think  
How often mortality stands on the brink  
Of its grave without any misgiving:  
And yet in this slippery world of strife,  
In the stir of human bustle so rife,  
There are daily sounds to tell us that Life  
Is dying, and Death is living!

Ay, Beauty the Girl, and Love the Boy,  
Bright as they are with hope and joy,  
How their souls would sadden instanter,  
To remember that one of those wedding-  
bells,  
That ring so merrily through the dells,  
Is the same that knells  
Our sad farewells,  
Only broken into a canter!

But breath and blood set doom at naught—  
How little the wretched Countess thought,  
When at night she unloos'd her sandal,  
That the Fates had woven her burial-  
cloth,

*MISS KILMANSEGG*

And that Death, in the shape of a Death's  
Head Moth,  
Was fluttering round her candle!

As she look'd at her clock of or-molu,  
For the hours she had gone so wearily  
through

At the end of a day of trial—  
How little she saw in her pride of prime  
The Dart of Death in the Hand of  
Time—

That hand which mov'd on the dial!

As she went with her taper up the stair,  
How little her swollen eye was aware  
That the shadow which follow'd was  
double!

Or when she clos'd her chamber door,  
It was shutting out, and for evermore,  
The world—and its worldly trouble.

Little she dreamt, as she laid aside  
Her jewels—after one glance of pride—

They were solemn bequests to Vanity—  
Or when her robe she began to doff,  
That she stood so near to the putting off  
Of the flesh that clothes humanity.

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And when she quench'd the taper's light,  
How little she thought as the smoke took  
flight,  
That her day was done—and merg'd in a  
night  
Of dreams and duration uncertain—  
Or, along with her own,  
That a hand of bone  
Was closing mortality's curtain!

But life is sweet, and mortality blind,  
And youth is hopeful, and Fate is kind  
In concealing the day of sorrow;  
And enough is the present tense of toil—  
For this world is, to all, a stiffish soil—  
And the mind flies back with a glad  
recoil  
From the debts not due till to-morrow.

Wherefore else does the Spirit fly  
And bid its daily cares good-bye,  
Along with its daily clothing?  
Just as the Felon condemn'd to die—  
With a very natural loathing—  
Leaving the Sheriff to dream of ropes,  
From his gloomy cell in a vision elopes  
To caper on sunny greens and slopes,  
Instead of the dance upon nothing.



*MISS KILMANSEGG*

Thus, even thus, the Countess slept,  
While Death still nearer and nearer crept,  
Like the Thane who smote the sleeping—

But her mind was busy with early joys,  
Her golden treasures and golden toys,  
That flash'd a bright  
And golden light  
Under lids still red with weeping.

The golden doll that she used to hug!  
Her coral of gold, and the golden mug!  
Her godfather's golden presents!  
The golden service she had at her meals,  
The golden watch, and chain, and seals,  
Her golden scissors, and thread, and reels,  
And her golden fishes and pheasants!

The golden guineas in silken purse—  
And the Golden Legends she heard from  
her nurse,

Of the Mayor in his gilded carriage—  
And London streets that were pav'd with  
gold—

And the Golden Eggs that were laid of  
old—

With each golden thing  
To the golden ring  
At her own auriferous Marriage!

## AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

And still the golden light of the sun  
Through her golden dream appear'd to  
run,

Though the night that roar'd without was  
one

To terrify seamen or gipsies—  
While the moon, as if in malicious mirth,  
Kept peeping down at the ruffled earth,  
As though she enjoyed the tempest's birth,  
In revenge of her old eclipses.

But vainly, vainly, the thunder fell,  
For the soul of the sleeper was under a spell  
That Time had lately embitter'd—

The Count, as once at her feet he knelt—  
That Foot which now he wanted to melt!  
But—hush!—'t was a stir at her pillow she  
felt—

And some object before her glitter'd.

'T was the Golden Leg!—she knew its  
gleam!

And up she started, and tried to scream,—

But ev'n in the moment she started—  
Down came the limb with a frightful smash,  
And, lost in the universal flash  
That her eyeballs made at so mortal a  
crash,

The Spark, called Vital, departed!

## MISS KILMANSEGG

Gold, still gold! hard, yellow, and cold,  
For gold she had lived, and she died for  
gold—

By a golden weapon—not oaken;  
In the morning they found her all alone—  
Stiff, and bloody, and cold as stone—  
But her Leg, the Golden Leg, was gone,  
And the “Golden Bowl was broken!”

Gold, still gold! it haunted her yet—  
At the Golden Lion the Inquest met—

Its foreman, a carver and gilder—  
And the jury debated from twelve till three  
What the Verdict ought to be,  
And they brought it in as *Felo de Se*,  
“Because her own Leg had killed her!”

### HER MORAL

Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!  
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,  
Molten, graven, hammered, and rolled;  
Heavy to get, and light to hold;  
Hoarded, bartered, bought, and sold,  
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled:  
Spurned by the young, but hugged by  
the old  
To the very verge of the churchyard  
mould;  
Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!

*AND HER PRECIOUS LEG*

Good or bad a thousand-fold!

How widely its agencies vary—  
To save—to ruin—to curse—to bless—  
As even its minted coins express,  
Now stamped with the image 'of Good  
Queen Bess,  
And now of a Bloody Mary!



## The Irish Schoolmaster

Alack! 'tis melancholy theme to think  
How Learning doth in rugged states  
    abide,  
And, like her bashful owl, obscurely  
    blink,  
In pensive glooms and corners, scarcely  
    spied;  
Not, as in Founders' Halls and domes  
    of pride,  
Served with grave homage, like a tragic  
    queen,  
But with one lonely priest compell'd to  
    hide,  
In midst of foggy moors and mosses  
    green,  
In that clay cabin hight the College of  
    Kilreen!

This College looketh South and West  
    also,  
Because it hath a cast in windows twain;

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

Crazy and crack'd they be, and wind doth  
blow  
Thorough transparent holes in every  
pane,  
Which Dan, with many paines, makes  
whole again  
With nether garments, which his thrift  
doth teach  
To stand for glass, like pronouns, and  
when rain  
Stormeth, he puts, "once more unto the  
breach",  
Outside and in, tho' broke, yet so he  
mendeth each.

And in the midst a little door there is,  
Whereon a board that doth congratulate  
With painted letters, red as blood I wis,  
Thus written:

### *"CHILDREN TAKEN IN TO BATE":*

And oft, indeed, the inward of that gate,  
Most ventriloque, doth utter tender  
squeak,  
And moans of infants that bemoan their  
fate,  
In midst of sounds of Latin, French, and  
Greek,  
Which, all i' the Irish tongue, he teacheth  
them to speak.

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

For some are meant to right illegal  
wrongs,  
And some for Doctors of Divinitie,  
Whom he doth teach to murder the dead  
tongues,  
And so win academical degree;  
But some are bred for service of the  
sea,  
Howbeit, their store of learning is but  
small,  
For mickle waste he counteth it would  
be  
To stock a head with bookish wares  
at all,  
Only to be knocked off by ruthless cannon  
ball.

Six babes he sways,—some little and  
some big,  
Divided into classes six;—also,  
He keeps a parlour boarder of a pig, \*  
That in the College fareth to and fro,  
And picketh up the urchins' crumbs  
below,—  
And eke the learned rudiments they  
scan,  
And thus his A, B, C doth wisely know,—  
Hereafter to be shown in caravan,  
And raise the wonderment of many a  
learned man.

## THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER

Also, he schools some tame familiar  
fowls,  
Whereof, above his head, some two or  
three  
Sit darkly squatting, like Minerva's owls,  
But on the branches of no living tree,  
And overlook the learned family;  
While, sometimes, Partlet, from her  
gloomy perch,  
Drops feather on the nose of Dominic,  
Meanwhile, with serious eye, he makes  
research  
In leaves of that sour tree of knowledge—  
now a birch.

No chair he hath, the awful Pedagogue,  
Such as would magisterial hams imbed,  
But sitteth lowly on a beechen log,  
Secure in high authority and dread:  
Large, as a dome for learning, seems his  
head,  
And like Apollo's, all beset with rays,  
Because his locks are so unkempt and  
red,  
And stand abroad in many several ways:  
No laurel crown he wears, howbeit his cap  
is baize.

And, underneath, a pair of shaggy brows  
O'erhang as many eyes of gizzard hue,



## THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER

That inward giblet of a fowl, which  
shows

A mongrel tint, that is ne brown ne blue;  
His nose,—it is a coral to the view;  
Well nourished with Pierian Potheen,—  
For much he loves his native mountain  
dew;—

But to depict the dye would lack, I ween,  
A bottle-red, in terms, as well as bottle-  
green.

As for his coat, 't is such a jerkin short  
As Spenser had, ere he composed his  
Tales;

But underneath he hath no vest, nor  
aught,

So that the wind his airy breast assails;  
Below, he wears the nether garb of  
males,

Of crimson-plush, but non-plushed at the  
knee;—

Thence further down the native red pre-  
vails,

Of his own naked fleecy hosiery:—  
Two sandals, without soles, complete his  
cap-a-pie.

Nathless, for dignity, he now doth lap  
His function in a magisterial gown,

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

That shows more countries in it than a  
map,—  
Blue tinct, and red, and green, and  
russet brown,  
Besides some blots, standing for country-  
town;  
And eke some rents, for streams and  
rivers wide;  
But, sometimes, bashful when he looks  
adown,  
He turns the garment of the other side,  
Hopeful that so the holes may never be  
espied!

And so he sits, amidst the little pack,  
That look for shady or for sunny noon  
Within his visage, like an almanack—  
His quiet smile foretelling gracious  
boon;  
But when his mouth droops down, like  
rainy moon,  
With horrid chill each little heart un-  
warms,  
Knowing that infant show'rs will follow  
soon,  
And with forebodings of near wrath and  
storms  
They sit, like timid hares, all trembling  
on their forms.

## THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER

Ah! luckless wight, who cannot then  
repeat  
"Corduoy Colloquy",—or "Ki, Kæ,  
Kod",—  
Full soon his tears shall make his turfy  
seat  
More sodden, tho' already made of sod,  
For Dan shall whip him with the word  
of God,—  
Severe by rule, and not by nature mild,  
He never spoils the child and spares the  
rod,  
But spoils the rod and never spares the  
child,  
And so with holy rule deems he is recon-  
cil'd.

But surely the just sky will never wink  
At men who take delight in childish  
throe,  
And stripe the nether-urchin like a pink  
Or tender hyacinth, inscribed with woe;  
Such bloody Pedagogues, when they  
shall know,  
By useless birches, that forlorn recess,  
Which is no holiday, in Pit below,  
Will hell not seem designed for their  
distress,—  
A melancholy place, that is all bottom-  
lesse?

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

Yet would the Muse not chide the whole-  
some use

Of needful discipline, in due degree.

Devoid of sway, what wrongs will time  
produce,

Whene'er the twig untrained grows up  
a tree.

This shall a Carder, that a Whiteboy be,  
Ferocious leaders of atrocious bands,

And Learning's help be used for infamie,  
By lawless clerks, that, with their bloody  
hands,

In murder'd English write Rock's murder-  
ous commands.

But ah! what shrilly cry doth now alarm  
The sooty fowls that dozed upon the beam,  
All sudden fluttering from the brandish'd  
arm,

And cackling chorus with the human  
scream;

Meanwhile, the scourge plies that un-  
kindly seam,

In Phelim's brogues, which bears his  
naked skin,

Like traitor cap in warlike fort, I deem,  
That falsely lets the fierce besieger in,

Nor seeks the Pedagogue by other course  
to win.



## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

No parent dear he hath to heed his  
cries;—

Alas! his parent dear is far aloof,  
And deep in Seven-Dial cellar lies,  
Killed by kind cudgel-play, or gin of  
proof,

Or climbeth, catwise, on some London  
roof,

Singing, perchance, a lay of Erin's isle,  
Or, whilst he labours, weaves a fancy-  
woof,

Dreaming he sees his home—his Phelim  
smile;

Ah me! that luckless imp, who weepeth  
all the while!

Ah! who can paint that hard and heavy  
time,

When first the scholar 'lists in learning's  
train,

And mounts her rugged steep, enforc'd  
to climb,

Like sooty imp, by sharp posterior pain  
From bloody twig, and eke that Indian  
cane

Wherein, alas! no sugar'd juices dwell,  
For this, the while one stripling's sluices  
drain,

Another weepeth over chilblains fell,  
Always upon the heel, yet never to be well!

## THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER

Anon a third, for his delicious root,  
Late ravish'd from his tooth by elder chit,  
So soon is human violence afoot,  
So hardly is the harmless biter bit!  
Meanwhile, the tyrant, with untimely wit  
And mouthing face, derides the small  
    one's moan,

Who, all lamenting for his loss, doth sit.  
Alack,—mischance comes seldomtimes  
    alone,

But aye the worried dog must rue more  
    curs than one.

For lo! the Pedagogue, with sudden  
    drub,

Smites his scald head, that is already sore,  
(Superfluous wound,—such is Misfortune's  
    rub!)

Who straight makes answer with re-  
    doubled roar,

And sheds salt tears twice faster than  
    before,

That still with backward fist he strives  
    to dry;

Washing with brackish moisture, o'er  
    and o'er,

His muddy cheek, that grows more foul  
    thereby

Till all his rainy face looks grim as rainy  
    sky.

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

So Dan, by dint of noise, obtains a  
peace,  
And with his natural untender knack,  
By new distress, bids former grievance  
cease,  
Like tears dried up with rugged huck-  
aback,  
That sets the mournful visage all a-  
wrack;  
Yet soon the childish countenance will  
shine  
Even as thorough storms the soonest  
slack,  
For grief and beef in adverse ways in-  
cline,  
This keeps, and that decays, when duly  
soak'd in brine.

Now all is hushed, and, with a look  
profound,  
The Dominie lays ope the learned page;  
(So be it called, although he doth ex-  
pound  
Without a book both Greek and Latin  
sage;)  
Now telleth he of Rome's rude infant  
age,  
How Romulus was bred in savage wood,  
By wet-nurse wolf, devoid of wolfish  
rage;

## THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER

And laid foundation-stone of walls of  
mud,  
But watered it, alas! with warm fraternal  
blood.

Anon he turns to that Homeric war,  
How Troy was sieged like Londonderry  
town;  
And stout Achilles, at his jaunting-car,  
Dragged mighty Hector with a bloody  
crown:  
And eke the bard, that sung of their  
renown,  
In garb of Greece most beggar-like and  
torn,  
He paints, with colly, wand'ring up and  
down:  
Because, at once, in seven cities born;  
And so, of parish rights was all his days  
forlorn.

Anon, through old Mythology he goes,  
Of gods defunct, and all their pedigrees,  
But shuns their scandalous amours, and  
shows  
How Plato wise, and clear-ey'd Socrates,  
Confess'd not to those heathen hes and  
shes;  
But thro' the clouds of the Olympic cope  
Beheld St. Peter, with his holy keys,



## THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER

And own'd their love was naught, and  
bow'd to Pope,  
Whilst all their purblind race in Pagan  
mist did grope.

From such quaint themes he turns, at  
last, aside,  
To new philosophies, that still are green,  
And shows what rail-roads have been  
track'd to guide  
The wheels of great political machine;  
If English corn should grow abroad, I  
ween,  
And gold be made of gold, or paper  
sheet;  
How many pigs be born to each spal-  
peen;  
And, ah! how man shall thrive beyond  
his meat,—  
With twenty souls alive, to one square sod  
of peat!

Here, he makes end; and all the fry of  
youth,  
That stood around with serious look in-  
tense,  
Close up again their gaping eyes and  
mouth,  
Which they had opened to his eloquence,

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

As if their hearing were a threefold  
sense.

But now the current of his words is  
done,

And whether any fruits shall spring from  
thence,

In future time, with any mother's son,  
It is a thing, God wot! that can be told  
by none.

Now by the creeping shadows of the  
noon,

The hour is come to lay aside their lore;  
The cheerful Pedagogue perceives it soon,  
And cries, "Begone!" unto the imps,—  
and four

Snatch their two hats, and struggle for  
the door,

Like ardent spirits vented from a cask,  
All blythe and boisterous,—but leave two  
more,

With Reading made Uneasy for a task,  
To weep, whilst all their mates in merry  
sunshine bask,

Like sportive Elfin, on the verdant sod,  
With tender moss so sleekly overgrown,  
That doth not hurt, but kiss, the sole  
unshod,

So soothly kind is Erin to her own!

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

And one, at Hare and Hound, plays all  
alone,—

For Phelim's gone to tend his step-  
dame's cow;

Ah! Phelim's step-dame is a canker'd  
crone!

Whilst other twain play at an Irish row,  
And, with shillelah small, break one an-  
other's brow!

But careful Dominie, with ceaseless thrift,  
Now changeth ferula for rural hoe;  
But, first of all, with tender hand doth  
shift

His college gown, because of solar glow,  
And hangs it on a bush, to scare the  
crow:

Meanwhile, he plants in earth the dap-  
pled bean,

Or trains the young potatoes all a-row,  
Or plucks the fragrant leek for pottage  
green,

With that crisp curly herb, call'd Kale in  
Aberdeen.

And so he wisely spends the fruitful  
hours,

Linked each to each by labour, like a  
bee;

## *THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER*

Or rules in Learning's hall, or trims her  
bow'rs;  
Would there were many more such  
wights as he,  
To sway each capital academie  
Of Cam and Isis; for, alack! at each  
There dwells, I wot, some dronish Do-  
minie,  
That does no garden work, nor yet doth  
teach,  
But wears a floury head, and talks in  
flow'ry speech!



Faithless  
Nelly Gray

A PATHETIC BALLAD

Ben Battle was a soldier bold,  
And used to war's alarms;  
But a cannon ball took off his legs,  
So he laid down his arms!

Now as they bore him off the field,  
Said he, "Let others shoot,  
For here I leave my second leg,  
And the Forty-second Foot!"

The army-surgeons made him limbs:  
Said he,—“They're only pegs:  
But there's as wooden members quite  
As represent my legs!”

Now Ben he loved a pretty maid,  
Her name was Nelly Gray;  
So he went to pay her his devours  
When he'd devoured his pay!

## FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY

But when he called on Nelly Gray,  
She made him quite a scoff;  
And when she saw his wooden legs,  
Began to take them off!

"O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!  
Is this your love so warm?  
The love that loves a scarlet coat,  
Should be more uniform!"

She said, "I loved a soldier once,  
For he was blithe and brave;  
But I will never have a man  
With both legs in the grave!

"Before you had those timber toes,  
Your love I did allow,  
But then, you know, you stand upon  
Another footing now!"

"O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!  
For all your jeering speeches,  
At duty's call I left my legs  
In Badajos's *breaches!*"

"Why, then," said she, "you've lost the feet  
Of legs in war's alarms,  
And now you cannot wear your shoes  
Upon your seats of arms!"

*FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY*

"O, false and fickle Nelly Gray;  
I know why you refuse:—  
Though I've no feet—some other man  
Is standing in my shoes!

"I wish I ne'er had seen your face;  
But now a long farewell!  
For you will be my death;—alas!  
You will not be my *Nell!*"

Now when he went from Nelly Gray,  
His heart so heavy got—  
And life was such a burthen grown,  
It made him take a knot!

So round his melancholy neck  
A rope he did entwine,  
And, for his second time in life,  
Enlisted in the Line!

One end he tied around a beam,  
And then removed his pegs,  
And, as his legs were off,—of course  
He soon was off his legs!

And there he hung till he was dead  
As any nail in town,—  
For though distress had cut him up,  
It could not cut him down!

*FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY*

A dozen men sat on his corpse,  
To find out why he died—  
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,  
With a *stake* in his inside!



## Bianca's Dream

A VENETIAN STORY

### I

Bianca!—fair Bianca!—who could dwell  
With safety on her dark and hazel gaze,  
Nor find there lurked in it a witching spell,  
Fatal to balmy nights and blessed days?  
The peaceful breath that made the bosom  
swell,

She turned to gas, and set it in a blaze;  
Each eye of hers had love's Eupyrion in it,  
That he could light his link at in a minute.

### II

So that, wherever in her charms she shone,  
A thousand breasts were kindled into  
flame;  
Maidens who cursed her looks forgot their  
own,  
And beaux were turned to flambeaux  
where she came;

## BIANCA'S DREAM

All hearts indeed were conquered but her  
own,  
Which none could ever temper down or  
tame:  
In short, to take our haberdasher's hints,  
She might have written over it—"from  
Flint's".

### III

She was, in truth, the wonder of her sex,  
At least in Venice—where with eyes of  
brown,  
Tenderly languid, ladies seldom vex  
An amorous gentle with a needless frown;  
Where gondolas convey guitars by pecks,  
And love at casements climbeth up and  
down,  
Whom for his tricks and custom in that  
kind,  
Some have considered a Venetian blind.

### IV

Howbeit, this difference was quickly  
taught,  
Amongst more youths who had this  
cruel jailer,  
To hapless Julio—all in vain he sought  
With each new moon his hatter and his  
tailor;

## BIANCA'S DREAM

In vain the richest padusoy he bought,  
And went in brand-new beaver to assail  
her—  
As if to show that Love had made him  
*smart*  
All over—and not merely round his heart.

### V

In vain he laboured thro' the sylvan park  
Bianca haunted in—that where she came,  
Her learned eyes in wandering might mark  
The twisted cipher of her maiden name,  
Wholesomely going thro' a course of  
bark;  
No one was touched or troubled by his  
flame,  
Except the Dryads, those old maids that  
grow  
In trees—like wooden dolls in embryo.

### VI

In vain complaining elegies he writ,  
And taught his tuneful instrument to  
grieve,  
And sang in quavers how his heart was  
split,  
Constant beneath her lattice with each  
eve;

## BIANCA'S DREAM

She mocked his wooing with her wicked  
wit,  
And slashed his suit so that it matched  
his sleeve,  
Till he grew silent at the vesper star,  
And quite despairing, hamstringed his  
guitar.

### VII

Bianca's heart was coldly frosted o'er  
With snows unmelting—an eternal  
sheet;  
But his was red within him, like the core  
Of old Vesuvius, with perpetual heat;  
And oft he longed internally to pour  
His flames and glowing lava at her feet:  
But when his burnings he began to spout,  
She stopped his mouth,—and put the *crater*  
out.

### VIII

Meanwhile he wasted in the eyes of men,  
So thin, he seemed a sort of skeleton key  
Suspended at Death's door—so pale—and  
then  
He turned as nervous as an aspen-tree;  
The life of man is threescore years and  
ten,  
But he was perishing at twenty-three,



## BIANCA'S DREAM

For people truly said, as grief grew  
stronger,  
"It could not shorten his poor life—much  
longer".

### IX

For why, he neither slept, nor drank, nor  
fed,  
Nor relished any kind of mirth below ;  
Fire in his heart, and frenzy in his head,  
Love had become his universal foe,  
Salt in his sugar—nightmare in his bed,  
At last, no wonder wretched Julio,  
A sorrow-ridden thing, in utter dearth  
Of Hope,—made up his mind to cut her  
girth!

### X

For hapless lovers always die of old,  
Sooner than chew reflection's bitter cud;  
So Thisbe stuck herself, what time 'tis  
told,  
The tender-hearted mulberries wept  
blood;  
And so poor Sapho, when her boy was cold,  
Drowned her salt tear-drops in a salter  
flood,  
Their fame still breathing, tho' their  
death be past,  
For those old *suitors* lived beyond their last.

## BIANCA'S DREAM

### XI

So Julio went to drown,—when life was  
dull,

But took his corks, and merely had a  
bath;

And once he pulled a trigger at his skull,

But merely broke a window in his  
wrath;

And once, his hopeless being to annul,

He tied a pack-thread to a beam of lath,

A line so ample, 't was a query whether

'T was meant to be a halter or a tether.

### XII

Smile not in scorn, that Julio did not  
thrust

His sorrows thro'—'t is horrible to die!

And come down with our little all of dust,

That Dun of all the duns to satisfy;

To leave life's pleasant city as we must,

In Death's most dreary spunging-house  
to lie,

Where even all our personals must go

To pay the debt of Nature that we owe!

### XIII

So Julio lived:—'t was nothing but a pet

He took at life—a momentary spite;

## BIANCA'S DREAM

Besides, he hoped that time would some  
day get  
The better of love's flame, however  
bright;  
A thing that time has never compassed yet,  
For love, we know, is an immortal light;  
Like that old fire, that, quite beyond a doubt,  
Was always in,—for none have found it  
out.

### XIV

Meanwhile, Bianca dreamed—'t was once  
when Night  
Along the darkened plain began to creep,  
Like a young Hottentot, whose eyes are  
bright,  
Altho' in skin as sooty as a sweep:  
The flowers had shut their eyes—the  
zephyr light  
Was gone, for it had rocked the leaves  
to sleep,  
And all the little birds had laid their heads  
Under their wings—sleeping in feather  
beds.

### XV

Lone in her chamber sat the dark-eyed  
maid,  
By easy stages jaunting thro' her  
prayers,

*BIANCA'S DREAM*

But list'ning sidelong to a serenade  
That robbed the saints a little of their  
shares:  
For Julio underneath the lattice played  
His *Deh Vieni*, and such amorous airs,  
Born only underneath Italian skies,  
Where every fiddle has a Bridge of Sighs.

XVI

Sweet was the tune—the words were even  
sweeter—  
Praising her eyes, her lips, her nose, her  
hair,  
With all the common tropes wherewith in  
metre  
The hackney poets overcharge their  
fair.  
Her shape was like Diana's, but com-  
pleter;  
Her brow with Grecian Helen's might  
compare:  
Cupid, alas! was cruel Sagittarius,  
Julio—the weeping water-man, Aquarius.

XVII

Now, after listing to such laudings rare,  
'T was very natural indeed to go—  
What if she did postpone one little prayer—  
To ask her mirror, "if it was not so?"



## BIANCA'S DREAM

'T was a large mirror, none the worse for wear,  
Reflecting her at once from top to toe:  
And there she gazed upon that glossy track,  
That showed her front face tho' it "gave  
her back".

### XVIII

And long her lovely eyes were held in thrall,  
By that dear page where first the woman reads:  
That Julio was no flatterer, none at all,  
She told herself—and then she told her beads;  
Meanwhile, the nerves insensibly let fall  
Two curtains fairer than the lily breeds;  
For Sleep had crept and kissed her un-  
awares,  
Just at the half-way milestone of her prayers.

### XIX

Then like a drooping rose so bended she  
Till her bowed head upon her hand re-  
posed;

## BIANCA'S DREAM

But still she plainly saw, or seemed to see,  
That fair reflection, tho' her eyes were  
closed,

A beauty bright as it was wont to be,  
A portrait Fancy painted while she dozed:  
'Tis very natural, some people say,  
To dream of what we dwell on in the day.

### XX

Still shone her face—yet not, alas! the  
same,

But 'gan some dreary touches to assume,  
And sadder thoughts, with sadder changes  
came—

Her eyes resigned their light, her lips  
their bloom,  
Her teeth fell out, her tresses did the same,  
Her cheeks were tinged with bile, her  
eyes with rheum;  
There was a throbbing at her heart within,  
For oh! there was a shooting in her chin.

### XXI

And lo! upon her sad desponding brow,  
The cruel trenches of besieging age,  
With seams, but most unseemly, 'gan to  
show

Her place was booking for the seventh  
stage:

## BIANCA'S DREAM

And where her raven tresses used to flow,  
Some locks that Time had left her in  
his rage,  
And some mock ringlets, made her fore-  
head shady,  
A compound (like our Psalms) of Tête and  
Braidy.

### XXII

Then for her shape—alas! how Saturn  
wrecks,  
And bends, and corkscrews all the frame  
about,  
Doubles the hams, and crooks the straightest  
necks,  
Draws in the nape, and pushes forth  
the snout,  
Makes backs and stomachs concave or  
convex;  
Witness those pensioners called In and  
Out,  
Who all day watching first and second  
rater,  
Quaintly unbend themselves—but grow  
no straighter.

### XXIII

So Time with fair Bianca dealt, and made  
Her shape a bow, that once was like  
an arrow;

## BIANCA'S DREAM

His iron hand upon her spine he laid,  
And twisted all awry her "winsome  
marrow",  
In truth it was a change!—she had obeyed  
The holy Pope before her chest grew  
narrow,  
But spectacles and palsy seemed to make  
her  
Something between a Glassite and a  
Quaker.

### XXIV

Her grief and gall meanwhile were quite  
extreme,  
And she had ample reason for her trouble;  
For what sad maiden can endure to seem  
Set in for singleness, tho' growing double?  
The fancy maddened her; but now the  
dream,  
Grown thin by getting bigger, like a  
bubble,  
Burst,—but still left some fragments of  
its size,  
That, like the soapsuds, smarted in her eyes.

### XXV

And here—just here—as she began to heed  
The real world, her clock chimed out  
its score;



## BIANCA'S DREAM

A clock it was of the Venetian breed,  
That cried the hour from one to twenty-  
four;  
The works, moreover, standing in some  
need  
Of workmanship, it struck some dozens  
more;  
A warning voice that clenched Bianca's  
fears,  
Such strokes referring doubtless to her  
years.

### XXVI

At fifteen chimes she was but half a nun,  
By twenty she had quite renounced the  
veil;  
She thought of Julio just at twenty-one,  
And thirty made her very sad and pale,  
To paint that ruin where her charms  
would run;  
At forty all the maid began to fail,  
And thought no higher, as the late dream  
crossed her,  
Of single blessedness, than single Gloster.

### XXVII

And so Bianca changed;—the next sweet  
even,  
With Julio in a black Venetian bark,

## BIANCA'S DREAM

Rowed slow and stealthily — the hour,  
eleven,

Just sounding from the tower of old  
St. Mark;

She sat with eyes turned quietly to heav'n,  
Perchance rejoicing in the grateful dark  
That veiled her blushing cheek,—for Julio  
brought her,

Of course, to break the ice upon the  
water.

### XXVIII

But what a puzzle is one's serious mind  
To open;—oysters, when the ice is thick,  
Are not so difficult and disinclined;

And Julio felt the declaration stick  
About his throat in a most awful kind;

However, he contrived by bits to pick  
His trouble forth,—much like a rotten cork  
Groped from a long-neck'd bottle with a  
fork.

### XXIX

But love is still the quickest of all readers;  
And Julio spent besides those signs pro-  
fuse

That English telegraphs and foreign  
pleaders,

In help of language, are so apt to use;

## BIANCA'S DREAM

Arms, shoulders, fingers, all were inter-  
ceders,

Nods, shrugs, and bends,—Bianca could  
not choose

But soften to his suit with more facility,  
He told his story with so much agility.

### XXX

“Be thou my park, and I will be thy dear,  
(So he began at last to speak or quote;)

Be thou my bark, and I thy gondolier,

(For passion takes this figurative note;)

Be thou my light, and I thy chandelier;

Be thou my dove, and I will be thy cote:

My lily be, and I will be thy river;

Be thou my life—and I will be thy liver.”

### XXXI

This, with more tender logic of the kind,

He poured into her small and shell-like  
ear,

That timidly against his lips inclined;

Meanwhile her eyes glanced on the silver  
sphere

That even now began to steal behind

A dewy vapour, which was lingering near,  
Wherein the dull moon crept all dim and  
pale,

Just like a virgin putting on the veil:—

*BIANCA'S DREAM*

XXXII

Bidding adieu to all her sparks—the stars,  
That erst had wooed and worshipped in  
her train,  
Saturn and Hesperus, and gallant Mars—  
Never to flirt with heavenly eyes again.  
Meanwhile, remindful of the convent bars,  
Bianca did not watch these signs in vain,  
But turned to Julio at the dark eclipse,  
With words, like verbal kisses, on her lips.

XXXIII

He took the hint full speedily, and, backed  
By love, and night, and the occasion's  
meetness,  
Bestowed a something on her cheek that  
smacked  
(Tho' quite in silence) of ambrosial  
sweetness,  
That made her think all other kisses lacked  
Till then, but what she knew not, of  
completeness:  
Being used but sisterly salutes to feel,  
Insipid things—like sandwiches of veal.

XXXIV

He took her hand, and soon she felt him  
wring

The pretty fingers all instead of one;

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*BIANCA'S DREAM*

Anon his stealthy arm began to cling  
About her waist that had been clasped  
by none;  
Their dear confessions I forbear to sing,  
Since cold description would but be out-  
run:  
For bliss and Irish watches have the  
pow'r,  
In twenty minutes to lose half an hour!

## Death's Ramble

One day the dreary old King of Death  
Inclined for some sport with the carnal,  
So he tied a pack of darts on his back,  
And quietly stole from his charnel.

His head was bald of flesh and of hair,  
His body was lean and lank,  
His joints at each stir made a crack, and  
the cur  
Took a gnaw, by the way, at his shank.

And what did he do with his deadly darts,  
This goblin of grisly bone?  
He dabbled and spill'd man's blood, and he  
kill'd  
Like a butcher that kills his own.

The first he slaughter'd it made him laugh  
(For the man was a coffin-maker),  
To think how the mutes, and men in black  
suits,  
Would mourn for an undertaker.

## DEATH'S RAMBLE

Death saw two Quakers sitting at church:  
Quoth he, "We shall not differ".  
And he let them alone, like figures of stone,  
For he could not make them stiffer.

He saw two duellists going to fight,  
In fear they could not smother;  
And he shot one through at once—for he  
knew  
They never would shoot each other.

He saw a watchman fast in his box,  
And he gave a snore infernal;  
Said Death, "he may keep his breath, for  
his sleep  
Can never be more eternal".

He met a coachman driving his coach,  
So slow, that his fare grew sick;  
But he let him stray on his tedious way,  
For Death only wars on the *quick*.

Death saw a toll-man taking a toll,  
In the spirit of his fraternity;  
But he knew that sort of man would extort,  
Though summon'd to all eternity.

He found an author writing his life,  
But he let him write no further;

## *DEATH'S RAMBLE*

For Death, who strikes whenever he likes,  
Is jealous of all self-murder!

Death saw a patient that pull'd out his  
purse,  
And a doctor that took the sum;  
But he let them be—for he knew that the  
“fee”  
Was a prelude to “faw” and “fum”.

He met a dustman ringing a bell,  
And he gave him a mortal thrust;  
For himself, by law, since Adam's flaw,  
Is contractor for all our dust.

He saw a sailor mixing his grog,  
And he marked him out for slaughter;  
For on water he scarcely had cared for  
Death,  
And never on rum-and-water.

Death saw two players playing at cards,  
But the game wasn't worth a dump,  
For he quickly laid them flat with a spade,  
To wait for the final trump!



## The Epping Hunt

"HUNT'S ROASTED——"

"On Monday they begun to hunt."—*Chevy Chase.*

John Huggins was as bold a man  
As trade did ever know,  
A warehouse good he had, that stood  
Hard by the church of Bow.

There people bought Dutch cheeses round,  
And single Gloster flat;  
And English butter in a lump,  
And Irish—in a *pat*.

Six days a week beheld him stand,  
His business next his heart,  
At *counter*, with his apron tied  
About his *counter-part*.

The seventh in a sluice-house box,  
He took his pipe and pot:  
On Sundays for *eel-piety*,  
A very noted spot.

## THE EPPING HUNT

Ah, blest if he had never gone  
Beyond its rural shed!  
One Easter-tide, some evil guide  
Put Epping in his head!

Epping, for butter justly fam'd,  
And pork in sausage pop't;  
Where winter time, or summer time,  
Pig's flesh is always *chop't*.

But famous more, as annals tell,  
Because of Easter chase;  
There ev'ry year, 'twixt dog and deer,  
There is a gallant race.

With Monday's sun John Huggins rose,  
And slapt his leather thigh,  
And sang the burthen of the song,  
"This day a stag must die".

For all the livelong day before,  
And all the night in bed,  
Like Beckford, he had nourish'd "Thoughts  
On Hunting" in his head.

Of horn and morn, and hark and bark,  
And echo's answering sounds,  
All poets' wit hath ever writ  
In *dog-rel* verse of *hounds*.

## THE EPPING HUNT

Alas! there was no warning voice  
To whisper in his ear,  
Thou art a fool in leaving *Cheap*  
To go and hunt the *deer*!

No thought he had of twisted spine,  
Or broken arms or legs;  
Not *chicken-hearted* he, altho'  
'T was whisper'd of his *eggs*!

Ride out he would, and hunt he would,  
Nor dreamt of ending ill;  
Mayhap with Dr. *Ridout's* fee,  
And Surgeon *Hunter's* bill.

So he drew on his Sunday boots,  
Of lustre superfine;  
The liquid black they wore that day,  
Was *Warren*-ted to shine.

His yellow buckskins fitted close,  
As erst, upon a stag;  
Thus well equipt he gaily skipt,  
At once upon his nag.

But first to him that held the rein  
A crown he nimbly flung;  
For holding of the horse?—why, no—  
For holding of his tongue.

## THE EPPING HUNT

To say the horse was Huggins' own  
Would only be a brag;  
His neighbour Fig and he went halves,  
Like Centaurs, in a nag.

And he that day had got the grey,  
Unknown to brother cit;  
The horse he knew would never tell,  
Altho' it was a *tit*.

A well-bred horse he was I wis,  
As he began to show,  
By quickly "rearing up within  
The way he ought to go".

But Huggins, like a wary man,  
Was ne'er from saddle cast;  
Resolved by going very slow,  
On sitting very fast.

And so he jogged to Tot'n'am Cross,  
An ancient town well known,  
Where Edward wept for Eleanor  
In mortar and in stone.

A royal game of fox and goose,  
To play on such a loss;  
Wherever she sets down her *orts*,  
Thereby he put a *cross*.



## THE EPPING HUNT

Now Huggins had a crony here,  
That lived beside the way;  
One that had promised sure to be  
His comrade for the day.

Whereas the man had chang'd his mind,  
Meanwhile upon the case!  
And meaning not to hunt at all,  
Had gone to Enfield Chase.

For why, his spouse had made him vow  
To let a game alone,  
Where folks that ride a bit of blood,  
May break a bit of bone.

"Now, be his wife a plague for life!  
A coward sure is he:"  
Then Huggins turned his horse's head  
And crossed the bridge of Lea.

Thence slowly on thro' Laytonstone,  
Past many a Quaker's box,—  
No friends to hunters after deer,  
Tho' followers of a *For*.

And many a score behind—before—  
The self-same route inclin'd;  
And minded all to march one way,  
Made one great march of mind.

## THE EPPING HUNT

Gentle and simple, he and she,  
And swell, and blood, and prig;  
And some had carts, and some a chaise,  
According to their gig.

Some long-ear'd jacks, some knacker's  
hacks  
(However odd it sounds),  
Let out that day *to hunt*, instead  
*Of going to the hounds!*

And some had horses of their own,  
And some were forced to job it;  
And some, while they inclin'd to *Hunt*  
Betook themselves to *Cob-it*.

All sorts of vehicles and vans,  
Bad, middling, and the smart;  
Here roll'd along the gay barouche,  
And there a dirty cart!

And lo! a cart that held a squad  
Of costermonger line;  
With one poor hack, like Pegasus,  
That slav'd for all the Nine!

Yet marvel not at any load  
That any horse might drag;  
When all, that morn, at once were drawn  
Together by a stag!

## THE EPPING HUNT

Now when they saw John Huggins go  
At such a sober pace;  
"Hallo!" cried they; "come, trot away,  
You'll never see the chase!"

But John, as grave as any judge,  
Made answers quite as blunt;  
"It will be time enough to trot,  
When I begin to hunt!"

And so he paced to Woodford Wells,  
Where many a horseman met,  
And letting go the *reins*, of course,  
Prepared for *heavy wet*.

And lo! within the crowded door,  
Stood Rounding, jovial elf;  
Here shall the Muse frame no excuse,  
But frame the man himself.

A snow-white head, a merry eye,  
A cheek of jolly blush;  
A claret tint laid on by health  
With master reynard's brush;

A hearty frame, a courteous bow,  
The prince he learn'd it from;  
His age about threescore and ten,  
And there you have Old Tom.

## THE EPPING HUNT

In merriest key I trow was he,  
So many guests to boast;  
So certain congregations meet,  
And elevate the host.

"Now welcome, lads," quoth he, "and  
prads,  
You're all in glorious luck:  
Old Robin has a run to-day,  
A noted forest buck.

"Fair Mead's the place, where Bob and  
Tom,  
In red already ride;  
'Tis but a *step*, and on a horse  
You soon may go *a-stride*."

So off they scamper'd, man and horse,  
As time and temper press'd—  
But Huggins, hitching on a tree,  
*Branched* off from all the rest.

Howbeit he tumbled down in time  
To join with Tom and Bob,  
All in Fair Mead, which held that day  
Its own fair meed of mob.

Idlers to wit—no Guardians some,  
Of Tattlers in a squeeze;  
Ramblers, in heavy carts and vans,  
Spectators, up in trees.



## THE EPPING HUNT

Butchers on backs of butchers' hacks,  
That *shambled* to and fro!  
Bakers intent upon a buck,  
Neglectful of the *dough*!

Change Alley Bears to speculate,  
As usual, for a fall;  
And green and scarlet runners, such  
As never climb'd a wall!

'T was strange to think what difference  
A single creature made;  
A single stag had caused a whole  
*Stagnation* in their trade.

Now Huggins from his saddle rose,  
And in the stirrups stood;  
And lo! a little cart that came  
Hard by a little wood.

In shape like half a hearse—tho' not  
For corpses in the least;  
For this contained the *deer alive*,  
And not the *deer deceased*!

And now began a sudden stir,  
And then a sudden shout,  
The prison-doors were opened wide,  
And Robin bounded out!

## THE EPPING HUNT

His antler'd head shone blue and red,  
Bedeck'd with ribbons fine;  
Like other bucks that come to 'list  
The hawbucks in the line.

One curious gaze of mild amaze,  
He turn'd and shortly took:  
Then gently ran adown the mead,  
And bounded o'er the brook.

Now Huggins, standing far aloof,  
Had never seen the deer,  
Till all at once he saw the beast  
Come charging in his rear.

Away he went, and many a score  
Of riders did the same,  
On horse and ass—like high and low  
And Jack pursuing game!

Good Lord! to see the riders now,  
Thrown off with sudden whirl,  
A score within the purling brook,  
Enjoy'd their "early purl".

A score were sprawling on the grass,  
And beavers fell in show'rs;  
There was another *Floorer* there,  
Beside the Queen of Flowers!

## THE EPPING HUNT

Some lost their stirrups, some their whips,  
Some had no caps to show;  
But few, like Charles at Charing Cross,  
Rode on in *Statue* quo.

"O dear! O dear!" now might you hear,  
"I've surely broke a bone";  
"My head is sore"—with many more  
Such speeches from the *thrown*.

Howbeit their wailings never moved  
The wide Satanic clan,  
Who grinned, as once the devil grinn'd,  
To see the fall of Man.

And hunters good, that understood,  
Their laughter knew no bounds,  
To see the horses "throwing off",  
So long before the hounds.

For deer must have due course of law,  
Like men the Courts among;  
Before those Barristers the dogs  
Proceed to "giving tongue".

But now Old Robin's foes were set,  
That fatal taint to find,  
That always is scent after him,  
Yet always left behind.

## THE EPPING HUNT

And here observe how dog and man  
A different temper shows,  
What hound resents that he is sent  
To follow his own nose?

Towler and Jowler—howlers all,  
No single tongue was mute;  
The stag had led a hart, and lo!  
The whole pack follow'd suit.

No spur he lack'd, fear stuck a knife  
And fork in either haunch;  
And every dog he knew had got  
An eye-tooth to his paunch!

Away, away! he scudded like  
A ship before the gale;  
Now flew to "hills we know not of",  
Now, nun-like, took the vale.

Another squadron charging now,  
Went off at furious pitch;—  
A perfect Tam o' Shanter mob,  
Without a single witch.

But who was he with flying skirts,  
A hunter did endorse,  
And, like a poet, seem'd to ride  
Upon a winged horse?



## THE EPPING HUNT

A whipper-in? no whipper-in:  
A huntsman? no such soul:  
A connoisseur, or amateur?  
Why, yes—a Horse Patrol.

A member of police, for whom  
The county found a nag,  
And, like Acteon in the tale,  
He found himself in stag!

Away they went, then, dog and deer,  
And hunters all away:  
The maddest horses never knew  
*Mad staggers* such as they!

Some gave a shout, some rolled about,  
And anticked as they rode;  
And butchers whistled on their curs,  
And milkmen *tally-ho'd!*

About two score there were, or more,  
That galloped in the race;  
The rest, alas! lay on the grass,  
As once in Chevy Chase!

But even those that galloped on  
Were fewer every minute;  
The field kept getting more select,  
Each thicket served to thin it.

## THE EPPING HUNT

For some pulled up, and left the hunt,  
Some fell in miry bogs,  
And vainly rose and "ran a muck",  
To overtake the dogs.

And some, in charging hurdle stakes,  
Were left bereft of sense;  
What else could be premised of blades  
That never learn'd to fence?

But Rounding, Tom, and Bob, no gate.  
Nor hedge, nor ditch could stay;  
O'er all they went, and did the work  
Of leap-years in a day!

And by their side see Huggins ride,  
As fast as he could speed;  
For, like Mazeppa, he was quite  
At mercy of his steed.

No means he had, by timely check,  
The gallop to remit,  
For firm and fast, between his teeth,  
The biter held the bit.

Trees raced along, all Essex fled  
Beneath him as he sate;  
He never saw a county go  
At such a county rate!

## THE EPPING HUNT

"Hold hard! hold hard! you'll lame the dogs!"

Quoth Huggins, "So I do;  
I've got the saddle well in hand,  
And hold as hard as you!"

Good lord! to see him ride along,  
And throw his arms about,  
As if with stitches in the side  
That he was drawing out!

And now he bounded up and down,  
Now like a jelly shook;  
Till bump'd and gall'd—yet not where Gall  
For bumps did ever look!

And rowing with his legs the while,  
As tars are apt to ride;  
With every kick he gave a prick  
Deep in the horse's side!

But soon the horse was well avenged  
For cruel smart of spurs,  
For, riding through a moor, he pitched  
His master in a furze!

Where, sharper set than hunger is,  
He squatted all forlorn;  
And, like a bird, was singing out  
While sitting on a thorn!

## THE EPPING HUNT

Right glad was he, as well might be,  
Such cushion to resign:  
"Possession is nine points", but his  
Seemed more than ninety-nine.

Yet worse than all the prickly points  
That entered in his skin,  
His nag was running off the while  
The thorns were running in!

Now had a Papist seen his sport  
Thus laid upon the shelf,  
Altho' no horse he had to cross,  
He might have crossed himself.

Yet surely still the wind is ill  
That none can say is fair;  
A jolly wight there was, that rode  
Upon a sorry mare!

A sorry mare, that surely came  
Of pagan blood and bone;  
For down upon her knees she went  
To many a stock and stone!

Now seeing Huggins' nag adrift,  
This farmer, shrewd and sage,  
Resolved, by changing horses here,  
To hunt another stage!



## THE EPPING HUNT

Tho' felony, yet who would let  
Another's horse alone,  
Whose neck is placed in jeopardy  
By riding on his own?

And yet the conduct of the man  
Seemed honest-like and fair;  
For he seem'd willing, horse and all,  
To go before the *mare*!

So up on Huggins' horse he got,  
And swiftly rode away,  
While Huggins mounted on the mare  
Done brown upon a bay!

And off they set in double chase,  
For such was fortune's whim,  
The farmer rode to hunt the stag,  
And Huggins hunted him!

Alas! with one that rode so well  
In vain it was to strive;  
A dab was he, as dabs should be—  
All leaping and alive!

And here of Nature's kindly care  
Behold a curious proof,  
As nags are meant to leap, she puts  
A frog in every hoof!

## THE EPPING HUNT

Whereas the mare, altho' her share  
She had of hoof and frog,  
On coming to a gate stopped short  
As stiff as any log;

While Huggins in the stirrup stood  
With neck like neck of crane,  
As sings the Scottish song—"to see  
The *gate* his *hart* had gane".

And, lo! the dim and distant hunt  
Diminished in a trice:  
The steeds, like Cinderella's team,  
Seemed dwindling into mice;

And, far remote, each scarlet coat  
Soon flitted like a spark—  
Tho' still the forest murmured back  
An echo of the bark!

But sad at soul John Huggins turned:  
No comfort could he find;  
While thus the "Hunting Chorus" sped,  
To stay five bars behind.

For tho' by dint of spur he got  
A leap in spite of fate—  
Howbeit there was no toll at all—  
They could not clear the gate.

## THE EPPING HUNT

And, like Fitzjames, he cursed the hunt,  
And sorely cursed the day,  
And mused a new Gray's elegy  
On his departed grey.

Now many a sign at Woodford town  
Its inn-vitation tells:  
But Huggins, full of ills, of course  
Betook him to the Wells,

Where Rounding tried to cheer him up  
With many a merry laugh:  
But Huggins thought of neighbour Fig,  
And called for half-and-half.

Yet, spite of drink, he could not blink  
Remembrance of his loss;  
To drown a care like his, required  
Enough to drown a horse.

When thus forlorn, a merry horn  
Struck up without the door—  
The mountain mob were all returned;  
The Epping Hunt was o'er!

And many a horse was taken out  
Of saddle, and of shaft;  
And men, by dint of drink, became  
The only "*beasts of draught*".

## THE EPPING HUNT

For now began a harder run  
On wine, and gin, and beer;  
And overtaken men discuss'd  
The overtaken deer.

How far he ran, and eke how fast,  
And how at bay he stood,  
Deerlike, resolved to sell his life  
As dearly as he could;

And how the hunters stood aloof,  
Regardful of their lives,  
And shunn'd a beast, whose very horns  
They knew could *handle* knives!

How Huggins stood when he was rubbed  
By help and ostler kind,  
And when they cleaned the clay before,  
How "worse remained behind".

And one, how he had found a horse  
Adrift—a goodly grey!  
And kindly rode the nag, for fear  
The nag should go astray.

Now Huggins, when he heard the tale,  
Jumped up with sudden glee;  
"A goodly grey! why, then, I say,  
That grey belongs to me!



## *THE EPPING HUNT*

"Let me endorse again my horse,  
Deliver'd safe and sound;  
And gladly I will give the man  
A bottle and a pound!"

The wine was drunk—the money paid,  
Tho' not without remorse,  
To pay another man so much  
For riding on his horse;—

And let the chase again take place  
For many a long, long year—  
John Huggins will not ride again  
To hunt the Epping Deer!

### MORAL

Thus Pleasure oft eludes our grasp  
Just when we think to grip her;  
And hunting after Happiness,  
We only hunt a slipper.

Lines to a Lady  
on her Departure  
for India

Go where the waves run rather Holborn-  
hilly,  
And tempests make a soda-water sea,  
Almost as rough as our rough Piccadilly,  
And think of me!

Go where the mild Madeira ripens *her*  
juice,—  
A wine more praised than it deserves to be!  
Go pass the Cape, just capable of ver-juice,  
And think of me!

Go where the tiger in the darkness  
prowleth,  
Making a midnight meal of he and she;  
Go where the lion in his hunger howleth,  
And think of me!

*LINES TO A LADY ON HER*

Go where the serpent dangerously coileth,  
Or lies along at full length like a tree,  
Go where the Suttee in her own soot  
broileth,

And think of me!

Go where with human notes the Parrot  
dealeth

In *mono-polly-logue* with tongue as free,  
And, like a woman, all she can revealeth,

And think of me!

Go to the land of muslin and nankeening,  
And parasols of straw where hats should be,  
Go to the land of slaves and palankeening,

And think of me!

Go to the land of jungles and of vast hills,  
And tall bamboos — may none *bamboozle*  
thee!

Go gaze upon their elephants and castles,

And think of me!

Go where a cook must always be a currier,  
And parch the peppered palate like a pea,  
Go where the fierce mosquito is a worrier,

And think of me!

*DEPARTURE FOR INDIA*

Go where the maiden on a marriage plan  
goes,

Consigned for wedlock to Calcutta's quay,  
Where woman goes for mart, the same as  
mangoes,

And think of me!

Go where the sun is very hot and fervent,  
Go to the land of pagod and rupee,

Where every black will be your slave and  
servant,

And think of me!



## The Angler's Farewell

"Resigned, I kissed the rod."

Well! I think it is time to put up!  
For it does not accord with my notions,  
Wrist, elbow, and chine,  
Stiff from throwing the line,  
To take nothing at last by my motions.

I ground-bait my way as I go,  
And dip in at each watery dimple;  
But however I wish  
To inveigle the fish,  
To my *gentle* they will not play *simple!*

Though my float goes so swimmingly on,  
My bad luck never seems to diminish;  
It would seem that the Bream  
Must be scarce in the stream,  
And the *Chub*, tho' it's chubby, be *thinnish!*

## THE ANGLER'S FAREWELL

Not a trout there can be in the place,  
Not a Grayling or Rud worth the mention,  
And although at my hook  
With *attention* I look,  
I can ne'er see my hook with a *Tench* on!

At a brandling once Gudgeon would gape,  
But they seem upon different terms now;  
Have they taken advice  
Of the "*Council of Nice*",  
And rejected their "*Diet of Worms*" now?

In vain my live minnow I spin,  
Not a Pike seems to think it worth snatch-  
ing;  
For the gut I have brought,  
I had better have bought  
A good *rope* that was used to *Jack-Ketching*!

Not a nibble has ruffled my cork,  
It is vain in this river to search then;  
I may wait till it's night,  
Without any bite,  
And at *roost-time* have never a *Perch* then!

No Roach can I meet with—no Bleak,  
Save what in the air is so sharp now;  
Not a Dace have I got,  
And I fear it is not  
"*Carpe diem*", a day for the Carp now!

## THE ANGLER'S FAREWELL

Oh! there is not a one-pound prize  
To be got in this fresh-water lottery!  
What then can I deem  
Of so fishless a stream  
But that 'tis—like St. Mary's—*Ottery!*

For an Eel I have learned how to try,  
By a method of Walton's own showing—  
But a fisherman feels  
Like prospect of Eels,  
In a path that's devoted to towing!

I have tried all the water for miles,  
Till I'm weary of dipping and casting,  
And hungry and faint—  
Let the Fancy just paint  
What it is, *without Fish*, to be *Fasting!*

And the rain drizzles down very fast,  
While my dinner-time sounds from a far  
bell—  
So, wet to the skin,  
I'll e'en back to my inn,  
Where at least I am sure of a *Bar-bell!*

## I'm not a Single Man

"Double, single, and the rub."—*Hoyle.*

"This, this is solitude."—*Byron.*

Well, I confess, I did not guess  
A simple marriage vow  
Would make me find all women-kind  
Such unkind women now!  
They need not, sure, as *distant* be  
As Java or Japan,—  
Yet every Miss reminds me this—  
I'm not a single man!

Once they made choice of my bass voice  
To share in each duet;  
So well I danced, I somehow chanced  
To stand in every set:  
They now declare I cannot sing,  
And dance on Bruin's plan;  
Me draw!—me paint!—me anything!—  
I'm not a single man!

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## *I'M NOT A SINGLE MAN*

Once I was asked advice, and tasked  
What works to buy or not,  
And "would I read that passage out  
I so admired in Scott?"  
They then could bear to hear one read;  
But if I now began,  
How they would snub "my pretty page";—  
I'm not a single man!

One used to stitch a collar then,  
Another hemmed a frill;  
I had more purses netted then  
Than I could hope to fill.  
I once could get a button on,  
But now I never can—  
My buttons then were bachelor's—  
I'm not a single man!

Oh, how they hated politics  
Thrust on me by papa:  
But now my chat—they all leave that  
To entertain mamma.  
Mamma, who praises her own self,  
Instead of Jane or Ann,  
And lays "her girls" upon the shelf—  
I'm not a single man!

Ah me, how strange it is the change,  
In parlour and in hall,

## *I'M NOT A SINGLE MAN*

They treat me so, if I but go  
To make a morning call.  
If they had hair in papers once,  
Bolt up the stairs they ran;  
They now sit still in dishabille—  
I'm not a single man!

Miss Mary Bond was once so fond  
Of Romans and of Greeks;  
She daily sought my Cabinet  
To study my antiques.  
Well, now she doesn't care a dump  
For ancient pot or pan,  
Her taste at once is modernized—  
I'm not a single man!

My spouse is fond of homely life,  
And all that sort of thing;  
I go to balls without my wife,  
And never wear a ring:  
And yet each Miss to whom I come,  
As strange as Genghis Khan,  
Knows by some sign, I can't divine—  
I'm not a single man!

Go where I will, I but intrude,  
I'm left in crowded rooms,  
Like Zimmerman on Solitude,  
Or Hervey at his Tombs.

*I'M NOT A SINGLE MAN*

From head to heel, they make me feel,  
Of quite another clan;  
Compelled to own, though left alone  
I'm not a single man!

Miss Towne the toast, though she can  
boast

A nose of Roman line,  
Will turn up even that in scorn  
At compliments of mine:  
She should have seen that I have been  
Her sex's partisan,  
And really married all I could—  
I'm not a single man!

'Tis hard to see how others fare,  
Whilst I rejected stand,—  
Will no one take my arm because  
They cannot have my hand?  
Miss Parry, that for some would go  
A trip to Hindostan,  
With me don't care to mount a stair—  
I'm not a single man!

Some change, of course, should be in force,  
But, surely, not so much—  
There may be hands I may not squeeze,  
But must I never touch?

*I'M NOT A SINGLE MAN*

Must I forbear to hand a chair,  
And not pick up a fan?  
But I have been myself picked up—  
I'm not a single man!

Others may hint a lady's tint  
Is purest red and white—  
May say her eyes are like the skies,  
So very blue and bright—  
I must not say that she *has eyes*,  
Or if I so began,  
I have my fears about my ears—  
I'm not a single man!

I must confess I did not guess  
A simple marriage vow  
Would make me find all women-kind  
Such unkind women now;  
I might be hashed to death, or smashed,  
By Mr. Pickford's van,  
Without, I fear, a single tear—  
I'm not a single man!



## The Supper Superstition

A PATHETIC BALLAD

"Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified!"—*Mercutio*.

'Twas twelve o'clock by Chelsea chimes,  
When all in hungry trim,  
Good Mister Jupp sat down to sup  
With wife, and Kate, and Jim.

Said he, "Upon this dainty cod  
How bravely I shall sup"—  
When, whiter than the table-cloth,  
A GHOST came rising up!

"O father dear, O mother dear,  
Dear Kate, and brother Jim—  
You know when someone went to sea—  
Don't cry—but I am him!

## THE SUPPER SUPERSTITION

"You hope some day with fond embrace  
To greet your absent Jack,  
But oh, I am coming here to say  
I'm never coming back!

"From Alexandria we set sail,  
With corn, and oil, and figs,  
But steering 'too much Sow', we struck  
Upon the Sow and Pigs!

"The ship we pumped till we could see  
Old England from the tops;  
When down she went with all our hands,  
Right in the Channel's Chops.

"Just give a look in Norey's chart,  
The very place it tells;  
I think it says twelve fathom deep,  
Clay bottom, mixed with shells.

"Well, there we are till 'hands aloft',  
We have at last a call;  
The pug I had for brother Jim,  
Kate's parrot, too, and all.

"But oh, my spirit cannot rest  
In Davy Jones's sod,  
Till I've appeared to you and said—  
Don't sup on that 'ere Cod!

## *THE, SUPPER SUPERSTITION*

"You live on land, and little think  
What passes in the sea;  
Last Sunday week, at 2 p.m.,  
That Cod was picking me!

"Those oysters, too, that look so plump,  
And seem so nicely done,  
They put my corpse in many shells,  
Instead of only one.

"O, do not eat those oysters then,  
And do not touch the shrimps;  
When I was in my briny grave,  
They sucked my blood-like imps!

"Don't eat what brutes would never eat,  
The brutes I used to pat,  
They'll know the smell they used to smell,  
Just try the dog and cat!"

The Spirit fled—they wept his fate,  
And cried, alack, alack!  
At last up started brother Jim,  
"Let's try if Jack was Jack!"

They call'd the Dog, they call'd the Cat,  
And little Kitten too,  
And down they put the Cod and sauce,  
To see what brutes would do.

## *THE SUPPER SUPERSTITION*

Old Tray licked all the oysters up,  
Puss never stood at crimps,  
But munched the Cod—and little Kit  
Quite feasted on the shrimps!

The thing was odd, and minus Cod  
And sauce, they stood like posts;  
O, prudent folks, for fear of hoax,  
Put no belief in Ghosts!



## The Fall

"Down, down, down, ten thousand fathoms deep."  
—*Count Fathom*

Who does not know that dreadful gulf,  
where Niagara falls,  
Where eagle unto eagle screams, to vulture  
vulture calls;  
Where down beneath, Despair and Death  
in liquid darkness grope,  
And upward, on the foam there shines a  
rainbow without Hope;  
While, hung with clouds of Fear and  
Doubt, the unreturning wave  
Suddenly gives an awful plunge, like life  
into the grave;  
And many a hapless mortal there hath  
dived to bale or bliss;  
One—only one—hath ever lived to rise from  
that abyss!  
Oh, Heaven! it turns me now to ice with  
chill of fear extreme,  
To think of my frail bark adrift on that  
tumultuous stream!

## THE FALL

In vain with desperate sinews, strung by  
love of life and light,  
I urged that coffin, my canoe, against the  
current's might:  
On—on—still on—direct for doom, the river  
rush'd in force,  
And fearfully the stream of Time raced with  
it in its course.  
My eyes I closed—I dared not look the  
way towards the goal;  
But still I view'd the horrid close, and  
dreamt it in my soul.  
Plainly, as through transparent lids, I saw  
the fleeting shore!  
And lofty trees, like winged things, flit by  
for evermore;  
Plainly—but with no prophet sense—I  
heard the sullen sound,  
The torrent's voice—and felt the mist, like  
death-sweat gathering round.  
O agony! O life! My home! and those  
that made it sweet:  
Ere I could pray, the torrent lay beneath  
my very feet.  
With frightful whirl, more swift than  
thought, I passed the dizzy edge,  
Bound after bound, with hideous bruise, I  
dashed from ledge to ledge,  
From crag to crag,—in speechless pain,—  
from midnight deep to deep;

## THE FALL

I did not die,—but anguish stunn'd my  
senses into sleep.  
How long entranced, or whither dived, no  
clue I have to find:  
At last the gradual light of life came dawn-  
ing o'er my mind;  
And through my brain there thrill'd a cry,  
—a cry as shrill as birds,  
Of vulture or of eagle kind, but this was  
set to words:  
"It's Edgar Huntley in his cap and night-  
gown, I declares;  
He's been a-walking in his sleep, and  
pitch'd all down the stairs!"

Sally Simpkin's  
Lament, or, John  
Jones's Kit-Cat-  
astrophe.

"He left his body to the sea,  
And made a shark his legatee."

—*Bryan and Perenne.*

"Oh! what is that comes gliding in,  
And quite in middling haste?  
It is the picture of my Jones,  
And painted to the waist.

"It is not painted to the life,  
For where's the trousers blue?  
Oh, Jones, my dear!—Oh dear! my Jones,  
What is become of you?"

"Oh! Sally dear, it is too true,—  
The half that you remark  
Is come to say my other half  
Is bit off by a shark!

"Oh! Sally, sharks do things by halves,  
Yet most completely do!  
A bite in one place seems enough,  
But I've been bit in two.



## SALLY SIMPKIN'S LAMENT

"You know I once was all your own,  
But now a shark must share!  
But let that pass—for now to you  
I'm neither here nor there.

"Alas! death has a strange divorce  
Effected in the sea,  
It has divided me from you,  
And even me from me!

"Don't fear my ghost will walk o' nights  
To haunt, as people say;  
My ghost *can't* walk, for, oh! my legs  
Are many leagues away!

"Lord! think when I am swimming round,  
And looking where the boat is,  
A shark just snaps away a *half*  
Without 'a *quarter's* notice'.

"One half is here, the other half  
Is near Columbia placed;  
Oh! Sally, I have got the whole  
Atlantic for my waist.

"But now, adieu—a long adieu!  
I've solved death's awful riddle,  
And would say more, but I am doomed  
To break off in the middle."

## The Lost Heir

"O where, and oh where  
Is my bonny laddie gone."

—*Old Song.*

One day, as I was going by  
That part of Holborn christened High,  
I heard a loud and sudden cry,  
That chill'd my very blood;  
And lo! from out a dirty alley,  
Where pigs and Irish went to rally,  
I saw a crazy woman sally,  
Bedaub'd with grease and mud.  
She turn'd her east, she turn'd her west,  
Staring like Pythoness possesst,  
With streaming hair and heaving breast,  
As one stark mad with grief.  
This way and that she wildly ran,  
Jostling with woman and with man--  
Her right hand held a frying-pan,  
The left a lump of beef.  
At last her frenzy seem'd to reach  
A point just capable of speech,

## THE LOST HEIR

And with a tone almost a screech,  
As wild as ocean bird's,  
Or female Ranter mov'd to preach,  
She gave her "sorrow words".

"O Lord! O dear, my heart will break, I  
shall go stick stark staring wild!  
Has ever a one seen any thing about the  
streets like a crying lost-looking child?  
Lawk help me, I don't know where to look,  
or to run, if I only knew which way—  
A Child as is lost about London streets,  
and especially Seven Dials, is a needle  
in a bottle of hay.

I am all in a quiver—get out of my sight,  
do, you wretch, you little Kitty M'Nab!  
You promised to have half an eye to him,  
you know you did, you dirty, deceitful  
young drab.

The last time as ever I see him, poor thing,  
was with my own blessed Motherly  
eyes,

Sitting as good as gold in the gutter,  
a playing at making little dirt pies.

I wonder he left the court where he was  
better off than all the other young  
boys,

With two bricks, an old shoe, nine oyster-  
shells, and a dead kitten by way of  
toys.

## THE LOST HEIR

When his Father comes home, and he  
always comes home as sure as ever  
the clock strikes one,

He'll be rampant, he will, at his child  
being lost; and the beef and the  
inguns not done!

La bless you, good folks, mind your own  
consarns, and don't be making a mob  
in the street;

O Sergeant M'Farlane! you have not come  
across my poor little boy, have you, in  
your beat?

Do, good people, move on! don't stand  
staring at me like a parcel of stupid  
stuck pigs;

Saints forbid! but he's p'raps been in-  
viggled away up a court for the sake  
of his clothes by the prigs;

He'd a very good jacket, for certain, for  
I bought it myself for a shilling one  
day in Rag Fair;

And his trousers considering not very much  
patch'd, and red plush, they was once  
his Father's best pair.

His shirt, it's very lucky I'd got washing  
in the tub, or that might have gone  
with the rest;

But he'd got on a very good pinafore with  
only two slits and a burn on the  
breast.



## THE LOST HEIR

He'd a goodish sort of hat, if the crown  
was sew'd in, and not quite so much  
jagg'd at the brim,

With one shoe on, and the other shoe is a  
boot, and not a fit, and you'll know  
by that if it's him.

Except being so well dress'd, my mind  
would misgive, some old beggar  
woman in want of an orphan,

Had borrow'd the child to go a-begging  
with, but I'd rather see him laid out  
in his coffin!

Do, good people, move on, such a rabble of  
boys! I'll break every bone of 'em I  
come near,

Go home—you're spilling the porter—go  
home—Tommy Jones, go along home  
with your beer.

This day is the sorrowfullest day of my life,  
ever since my name was Betty Morgan.

Them vile Savoyards! they lost him once  
before all along of following a Monkey  
and an Organ:

O my Billy—my head will turn right round  
—if he's got kiddynapp'd with them  
Italians,

They'll make him a plaster parish image  
boy, they will, the outlandish tatter-  
demalions.

Billy—where are you, Billy?—I'm as hoarse

## *THE LOST HEIR*

as a crow, with screaming for ye, you  
young sorrow!

And sha'n't have half a voice, no more I  
sha'n't, for crying fresh herrings to-  
morrow.

O Billy, you're bursting my heart in two,  
and my life won't be of no more vally,  
If I'm to see other folk's darlin's, and none  
of mine, playing like angels in our  
alley,

And what shall I do but cry out my eyes,  
when I looks at the old three-legged  
chair,

As Billy used to make coaches and horses  
of, and there a'n't no Billy there!

I would run all the wide world over to find  
him, if I only know'd where to run.

Little Murphy, now I remember, was once  
lost for a month through stealing a  
penny bun,—

The Lord forbid of any child of mine! I  
think it would kill me raily,

To find my Bill holdin' up his little innocent  
hand at the Old Bailey.

For though I say it as oughtn't, yet I will  
say, you may search for miles and  
mileses

And not find one better brought up, and  
more pretty behaved, from one end to  
t'other of St. Giles's.

## THE LOST HEIR

And if I called him a beauty, it's no lie,  
but only as a Mother ought to speak;  
You never set eyes on a more handsomer  
face, only it hasn't been washed for a  
week;

As for hair, tho' it's red, it's the most  
nicest hair when I've time to just  
show it the comb;

I'll owe 'em five pounds, and a blessing  
besides, as will only bring him safe  
and sound home.

He's blue eyes, and not to be call'd a  
squint, though a little cast he's cer-  
tainly got;

And his nose is still a good un, tho' the  
bridge is broke, by his falling on a  
pewter pint pot;

He's got the most elegant wide mouth in  
the world, and very large teeth for his  
age;

And quite as fit as Mrs. Murdockson's  
child to play Cupid on the Drury Lane  
Stage.

And then he has got such dear winning  
ways—but O, I never never shall see  
him no more!

O dear! to think of losing him just after  
nussing him back from death's door!

Only the very last month when the wind-  
falls, hang 'em, was at twenty a penny!

*THE LOST HEIR*

And the threepence he'd got by grottoing  
was spent in plums, and sixty for a  
child is too many.

And the Cholera man came and white-  
wash'd us all and, drat him, made a  
seize of our hog.—

It's no use to send the Crier to cry him  
about, he's such a blunderin' drunken  
old dog;

The last time he was fetched to find a lost  
child, he was guzzling with his bell at  
the Crown,

And went and cried a boy instead of a girl,  
for a distracted Mother and Father  
about Town.

Billy—where are you, Billy, I say? come,  
Billy, come home, to your best of  
Mothers!

I'm scared when I think of them Cabroleys,  
they drive so, they'd run over their own  
Sisters and Brothers.

Or maybe he's stole by some chimbly-  
sweeping wretch, to stick fast in  
narrow flues and what not,

And be poked up behind with a picked  
pointed pole, when the soot has ketch'd,  
and the chimbly's red-hot.

Oh, I'd give the whole wide world, if the  
world was mine, to clap my two longin'  
eyes on his face,



## THE LOST HEIR

For he's my darlin' of darlin's, and if he  
don't soon come back, you 'll see me  
drop stone dead on the place.

I only wish I'd got him safe in these two  
Motherly arms, and wouldn't I hug  
him and kiss him!

• Lauk! I never knew what a precious he  
was—but a child don't feel like a child  
till you miss him.

Why, there he is! Punch and Judy hunting,  
the young wretch, it 's that Billy as  
sartin as sin!

But let me get him home, with a good  
grip of his hair, and I'm blest if he  
shall have a whole bone in his skin!"

## The Poacher

A SERIOUS BALLAD

"But a bold pheasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed can never be supplied."  
—*Goldsmith.*

Bill Blossom was a nice young man,  
And drove the Bury coach;  
But bad companions were his bane,  
And egg'd him on to poach.

They taught him how to net the birds,  
And how to noose the hare;  
And with a wiry terrier,  
He often set a snare.

Each "shiny night" the moon was bright,  
To park, preserve, and wood  
He went, and kept the game alive,  
By killing all he could.

Land-owners, who had rabbits, swore  
That he had this demerit—  
Give him an inch of warren, he  
Would take a yard of ferret.

## THE POACHER

At partridges he was not nice;  
And many, large and small,  
Without Hall's powder, without lead,  
Were sent to Leaden-Hall.

He did not fear to take a deer  
From forest, park, or lawn;  
And without courting lord or duke  
Used frequently to *fawn*.

Folks who had hares discovered snares—  
His course they could not stop:  
No barber he, and yet he made  
Their hares a perfect crop.

To pheasant he was such a foe,  
He tried the keepers' nerves;  
They swore he never seem'd to have  
*Jam* satis of *preserves*.

The Shooter went to beat, and found  
No sporting worth a pin,  
Unless he tried the *covers* made  
Of silver, plate, or tin.

In Kent the game was little worth,  
In Surrey not a button;  
The Speaker said he often tried  
The *Manors* about *Sutton*.

## THE POACHER

No county from his tricks was safe;  
In each he tried his lucks,  
And when the keepers were in *Beds*  
He often was at *Bucks*.

And when he went to *Bucks*, alas!  
They always came to *Herts*;  
And even *Oxon* used to wish  
That he had his deserts.

But going to his usual *Hants*,  
Old *Cheshire* laid his plots:  
He got entrapp'd by legal *Berks*,  
And lost his life on *Notts*.



## A Waterloo Ballad

To Waterloo, with sad ado,  
And many a sigh and groan,  
Amongst the dead, came Patty Head  
To look for Peter Stone.

"O prithee tell, good sentinel,  
If I shall find him here?  
I'm come to weep upon his corse,  
My Ninety-Second dear!

"Into our town a sergeant came,  
With ribands all so fine  
A-flaunting in his cap—alas!  
His bow enlisted mine!

"They taught him how to turn his toes,  
And stand as stiff as starch;  
I thought that it was love and May,  
But it was love and March!

## *A WATERLOO BALLAD*

"A sorry March indeed to leave  
The friends he might have kep',—  
No March of Intellect it was,  
But quite a foolish step.

"O prithee tell, good sentinel,  
If hereabout he lies?  
I want a corpse with reddish hair,  
And very sweet blue eyes."

Her sorrow on the sentinel  
Appear'd to deeply strike:  
"Walk in," he said, "among the dead  
And pick out which you like."

And soon she pick'd out Peter Stone,  
Half turned into a corse;  
A cannon was his bolster, and  
His mattress was a horse.

"O Peter Stone, O Peter Stone,  
Lord, here has been a skrimmage!  
What have they done to your poor breast,  
That used to hold my image?"

"O Patty Head, O Patty Head,  
You're come to my last kissing;  
Before I'm set in the Gazette  
As wounded, dead, and missing.

## A WATERLOO BALLAD

"Alas a splinter of a shell  
Right in my stomach sticks;  
French mortars don't agree so well  
With stomachs as French bricks.

"This very night a merry dance  
At Brussels was to be;—  
Instead of opening a ball,  
A ball has open'd me.

"Its billet every bullet has,  
And well it does fulfil it;  
I wish mine hadn't come so straight,  
But been a 'crooked billet'.

"And then there came a cuirassier  
And cut me on the chest;—  
He had no pity in his heart,  
For he had *steel'd his breast*.

"Next thing a lancer with his lance  
Began to thrust away;  
I call'd for quarter, but, alas!  
It was not Quarter-day.

"He ran his spear right through my arm,  
Just here above the joint:—  
O Patty dear, it was no joke,  
Although it had a point.

## A WATERLOO BALLAD

"With loss of blood I fainted off  
As dead as women do—  
But soon by charging over me,  
The *Coldstreams* brought me to.

"With kicks and cuts, and balls and blows,  
I throb and ache all over;  
I'm quite convinc'd the field of Mars  
Is not a field of clover!

"O why did I a soldier turn,  
For any royal Guelph?  
I might have been a butcher, and  
In business for myself!

"O why did I the bounty take?"  
(And here he gasp'd for breath)  
"My shillingworth of 'list is nail'd  
Upon the door of death.

"Without a coffin I shall lie,  
And sleep my sleep eternal:  
Not ev'n a *shell*—my only chance  
Of being made a *Kernel*!

"O Patty dear, our wedding bells  
Will never ring at Chester!  
Here I must lie in Honour's bed,  
That isn't worth a *tester*!



*A WATERLOO BALLAD*

"Farewell, my regimental mates,  
With whom I used to dress!  
My corps is changed, so I am now  
In quite another mess.

"Farewell, my Patty dear, I have  
No dying consolations,  
Except, when I am dead, you'll go  
And see th' Illuminations."

A Parental Ode  
to my Son, Aged  
Three Years and  
Five Months

Thou happy, happy elf!  
(But stop,—first let me kiss away that  
tear)—

Thou tiny image of myself!  
(My love, he's poking peas into his ear!)  
Thou merry, laughing sprite!  
With spirits feather-light,  
Untouch'd by sorrow and unsoil'd by sin—  
(Good heavens! the child is swallowing a  
pin!)

Thou little tricksy Puck!  
With antic toys so funnily bestuck,  
Light as the singing bird that wings the  
air—  
(The door! the door! he'll tumble down  
the stair!)

Thou darling of thy sire!  
(Why, Jane, he'll set his pinafore a-fire!)

## A PARENTAL ODE

Thou imp of mirth and joy!  
In love's dear chain so strong and bright  
a link,  
Thou idol of thy parents—(Drat the boy!  
There goes my ink!)

Thou cherub—but of earth;  
Fit playfellow for Fays, by moonlight pale,  
In harmless sport and mirth,  
(That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail!)  
Thou human humming-bee, extracting  
honey  
From ev'ry blossom in the world that blows,  
Singing in Youth's Elysium ever sunny—  
(Another tumble!—that's his precious nose!)

Thy father's pride and hope!  
(He'll break the mirror with that skipping-  
rope!)  
With pure heart newly stamp'd from  
Nature's mint—  
(Where *did* he learn that squint?)  
Thou young domestic dove!  
(He'll have that jug off, with another  
shove!)

Dear nursling of the hymeneal nest!  
(Are those torn clothes his best!)  
Little epitome of man!  
(He'll climb upon the table, that's his  
plan!)

*A PARENTAL ODE*

Touch'd with the beauteous tints of dawn-  
ing life—  
(He's got a knife!)

Thou enviable being!  
No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky  
foreseeing,  
Play on, play on,  
My elfin John!

Toss the light ball—bestride the stick—  
(I knew so many cakes would make him  
sick!)

With fancies buoyant as the thistledown,  
Prompting the face grotesque, and antic  
brisk,

With many a lamblike frisk—  
(He's got the scissors, snipping at your  
gown!)

Thou pretty opening rose!  
(Go to your mother, child, and wipe your  
nose!)

Balmy, and breathing music like the South,  
(He really brings my heart into my mouth!)

Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its  
star,—

(I wish that window had an iron bar!)  
Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove—

(I'll tell you what, my love,  
I cannot write, unless he's sent above!)



## Lieutenant Luff

A COMIC BALLAD

All you that are too fond of wine,  
Or any other stuff,  
Take warning by the dismal fate  
Of one Lieutenant Luff.  
A sober man he might have been,  
Except in one regard,  
He did not like *soft* water,  
So he took to *drinking hard!*

Said he, "Let others fancy slops,  
And talk in praise of Tea,  
But I am no *Bohemian*,  
So do not like *Bohea*.  
If Wine's a poison, so is Tea,  
Tho' in another shape:  
What matter whether one is kill'd  
By *canister* or *grape!*"

According to this kind of taste  
Did he indulge his drouth,

LIEUTENANT LUFF

And being fond of *Port*, he made  
A *port*-hole of his mouth!  
A single pint he might have sipp'd  
And not been out of sorts,  
In geologic phrase—the rock  
He split upon was *quarts*!

To "hold the mirror up to vice"  
With him was hard, alas!  
The worse for wine he often was,  
But not "before a glass"!  
No kind and prudent friend he had  
To bid him drink no more,—  
The only *chequers* in his course  
Were at a tavern door!

Full soon the sad effects of this  
His frame began to show,  
For that old enemy the gout  
Had taken him in *toe*!  
And joined with this an evil came  
Of quite another sort,—  
For while he drank, himself, his purse  
Was getting "*something short*".

For want of cash he soon had pawn'd  
One-half that he possess'd,  
And drinking show'd him *duplicates*  
Beforehand of the rest!

LIEUTENANT LUFF

So now his Creditors resolved  
To seize on his assets;  
For why,—they found that his *half-pay*  
Did not *half pay* his debts.

But Luff contriv'd a novel mode  
His creditors to chouse;  
For his own *execution* he  
Put into his own house!  
A pistol to the muzzle charged  
He took, devoid of fear;  
Said he, "This *barrel* is my last,  
So now for my last *bier*!"

Against his lungs he aim'd the slugs,  
And not against his brain,  
So he blew out his *lights*—and none  
Could blow them in again!  
A Jury for a Verdict met,  
And gave it in these terms:—  
"We find as how as certain *slugs*  
Has sent him to the *worms*!"

## Morning Meditations

Let Taylor preach upon a morning breezy,  
How well to rise while nights and larks  
are flying—  
For my part, getting up seems not so easy  
By half as *lying*.

What if the lark *does* carol in the sky,  
Soaring beyond the sight to find him out—  
Wherefore am I to rise at such a fly?  
I'm not a trout!

Talk not to me of bees and such like hums,  
The smell of sweet herbs at the morning  
prime—  
Only lie long enough, and bed becomes  
A bed of *time*.

To me Dan Phœbus and his car are nought,  
His steeds that paw impatiently about,—  
Let *them* enjoy, say I, as horses ought,  
The first turn-out!



## MORNING MEDITATIONS

Right beautiful the dewy meads appear,  
Besprinkled by the rosy-fingered girl;  
What then,—if I prefer my pillow beer  
To early *pearl*?

*My* stomach is not ruled by other men's,  
And, grumbling for a reason, quaintly begs  
Wherefore should master rise before the hens  
Have laid their eggs?

Why from a comfortable pillow start  
To see faint flushes in the east awaken,  
A fig, say I, for any streaky part,  
Excepting bacon!

An early riser Mr. Gray has drawn,  
Who used to haste the dewy grass among,  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn—  
Well—he died young!

With charwomen such early hours agree,  
And sweeps, that earn betimes their bite  
and sup,  
But I'm no climbing boy, and need not be  
All up—all up!

So here I'll lie, my morning calls deferring,  
Till something nearer to the stroke of  
noon;—  
A man that's fond precociously of *stirring*,  
Must be a *spoon*!

## The Mermaid of Margate

"Alas! what perils do environ  
That man who meddles with a siren!

—*Hudibras.*

On Margate beach, where the sick one  
    roams,  
And the sentimental reads;  
Where the maiden flirts, and the widow  
    comes  
Like the ocean to cast her weeds;—

Where urchins wander to pick up shells,  
And the Cit to spy at the ships,—  
Like the water gala at Sadler's Wells,—  
And the Chandler for watery dips;—

There's a maiden sits by the ocean brim,  
As lovely and fair as sin!  
But woe, deep water and woe to him,  
That she snareth like Peter Fin!

## *THE MERMAID OF MARGATE*

Her head is crowned with pretty sea-  
wares,  
And her locks are golden and loose,  
And seek to her feet, like other folk's  
heirs,  
To stand, of course, in her shoes!

And all day long she combeth them well,  
With a sea-shark's prickly jaw;  
And her mouth is just like a rose-lipped  
shell,  
The fairest that man e'er saw!

And the Fishmonger, humble as love may  
be,  
Hath planted his seat by her side;  
"Good-even, fair maid! Is thy lover at  
sea,  
To make thee so watch the tide?"

She turned about with her pearly brows,  
And clasped him by the hand;  
"Come, love, with me; I've a bonny  
house  
On the golden Goodwin sand."

And then she gave him a siren kiss,  
No honeycomb e'er was sweeter;  
Poor wretch! how little he dreamt for this  
That Peter should be salt-Peter:

## *THE MERMAID OF MARGATE*

And away with her prize to the wave she  
leapt,

Not walking, as damsels do,  
With toe and heel, as she ought to have  
stept,

But she hopt like a kangaroo;

One plunge, and then the victim was  
blind,

Whilst they galloped across the tide;  
At last, on the bank he waked in his  
mind,

And the Beauty was by his side.

One half on the sand, and half in the  
sea,

But his hair began to stiffen;  
For when he looked where her feet should  
be,

She had no more feet than Miss Biffen!

But a scaly tail, of a dolphin's growth,

In the dabbling brine did soak:

At last she opened her pearly mouth,

Like an oyster, and thus she spoke:

"You crimp my father, who was a skate,—

And my sister you sold—a maid;

So here remain for a fish'ry fate,

For lost you are, and betrayed!"



## *THE MERMAID OF MARGATE*

And away she went, with a sea-gull's  
scream,  
And a splash of her saucy tail;  
In a moment he lost the silvery gleam  
That shone on her splendid mail!

The sun went down with a blood-red  
flame,  
And the sky grew cloudy and black,  
And the tumbling billows like leap-frog  
came,  
Each over the other's back!

Ah me! it had been a beautiful scene,  
With the safe terra-firma round;  
But the green water-hillocks all seem'd  
to him  
Like those in a churchyard ground;

And Christians love in the turf to lie,  
Not in watery graves to be;  
Nay, the very fishes will sooner die  
On the land than in the sea.

And whilst he stood, the watery strife  
Encroached on every hand,  
And the ground decreased,—his moments  
of life  
Seemed measured, like Time's by sand;

## *THE MERMAID OF MARGATE*

And still the waters foamed in, like ale,  
In front, and on either flank,  
He knew that Goodwin and Co. must  
fail,  
There was such a run on the bank.

A little more, and a little more,  
The surges came tumbling in,  
He sang the evening hymn twice o'er,  
And thought of every sin!

Each flounder and plaice lay cold at his  
heart,  
As cold as his marble slab;  
And he thought he felt, in every part,  
The pincers of scalded crab.

The squealing lobsters that he had boiled,  
And the little potted shrimps,  
All the horny prawns he had ever spoiled,  
Gnawed into his soul, like imps!

And the billows were wandering to and  
fro,  
And the glorious sun was sunk,  
And Day, getting black in the face, as  
though  
Of the night-shade she had drunk!

## THE MERMAID OF MARGATE

Had there been but a smuggler's cargo  
adrift,  
One tub, or keg, to be seen,  
It might have given his spirits a lift  
Or an *anker* where *Hope* might lean!

But there was not a box or a beam afloat,  
To raft him from that sad place;  
Not a skiff, not a yawl, or a mackerel  
boat,  
Nor a smack upon Neptune's face.

At last his lingering hopes to buoy,  
He saw a sail and a mast,  
And called "Ahoy!"—but it was not a  
hoy,  
And so the vessel went past.

And with saucy wing that flapped in his  
face,  
The wild bird about him flew,  
With a shrilly scream, that twitted his  
case,  
"Why, thou art a sea-gull too!"

And lo! the tide was over his feet;  
Oh! his heart began to freeze,  
And slowly to pulse:—in another beat.  
The wave was up to his knees!

*THE MERMAID OF MARGATE*

He was deafened amidst the mountain  
tops,  
And the salt spray blinded his eyes,  
And washed away the other salt drops  
That grief had caused to arise:—

But just as his body was all afloat,  
And the surges above him broke,  
He was saved from the hungry deep by  
a boat  
Of Deal—(but builded of oak).

The skipper gave him a dram, as he lay,  
And chafed his shivering skin;  
And the Angel returned that was flying  
away  
With the spirit of Peter Fin!



Domestic Asides;  
or, Truth in  
Parentheses

"I really take it very kind,  
This visit, Mrs. Skinner!  
I have not seen you such an age—  
(The wretch has come to dinner!)

"Your daughters, too, what loves of  
girls—  
What heads for painters' easels!  
Come here and kiss the infant, dears,—  
(And give it p'rhaps the measles!)

"Your charming boys I see are home  
From Reverend Mr. Russel's;  
'T was very kind to bring them both,—  
(What boots for my new Brussels!)

"What! little Clara left at home?  
Well now, I call that shabby:  
I should have lov'd to kiss her so,—  
(A flabby, dabby babby!)

## *DOMESTIC ASIDES*

"And Mr. S., I hope he's well,  
Ah! though he lives so handy,  
He never now drops in to sup,—  
(The better for our brandy!)

"Come, take a seat—I long to hear  
About Matilda's marriage;  
You're come, of course, to spend the  
day!—  
(Thank Heav'n, I hear the carriage!)

"What! must you go? next time I hope  
You'll give me longer measure;  
Nay—I shall see you down the stairs—  
(With most uncommon pleasure!)

"Good-bye! good-bye! remember all  
Next time you'll take your dinners!  
(Now, David, mind I'm not at home  
In future to the Skinners!)"

## John Day

A PATHETIC BALLAD

"A day after the fair."—*Old Proverb.*

John Day he was the biggest man  
Of all the coachman kind,  
With back too broad to be conceived  
By any narrow mind.

The very horses knew his weight,  
When he was in the rear,  
And wished his box a Christmas-box,  
To come but once a year.

Alas! against the shafts of love,  
What armour can avail?  
Soon Cupid sent an arrow through  
His scarlet coat of mail.

The barmaid of the Crown he loved,  
From whom he never ranged,  
For though he changed his horses there,  
His love he never changed.

*JOHN DAY*

He thought her fairest of all fares,  
So fondly love prefers;  
And often, among twelve outsides,  
Deemed no outside like hers!

One day, as she was sitting down  
Beside the porter-pump—  
He came, and knelt with all his fat,  
And made an offer plump.

Said she, my taste will never learn  
To like so huge a man,  
So I must beg you will come here  
As little as you can.

But still he stoutly urged his suit  
With vows, and sighs, and tears,  
Yet could not pierce her heart, altho'  
He drove the Dart for years.

In vain he wooed, in vain he sued,  
The maid was cold and proud,  
And sent him off to Coventry,  
While on his way to Stroud.

He fretted all the way to Stroud,  
And thence all back to town,  
The course of love was never smooth,  
So his went up and down.



*JOHN DAY*

At last her coldness made him pine  
To merely bones and skin,  
But still he loved like one resolved  
To love through thick and thin.

Oh! Mary, view my wasted back,  
And see my dwindled calf;  
Tho' I have never had a wife,  
I've lost my better half.

Alas, in vain he still assail'd,  
Her heart withstood the dint;  
Though he had carried sixteen stone  
He could not move a flint.

Worn out, at last he made a vow  
To break his being's link;  
For he was so reduced in size,  
At nothing he could shrink.

Now some will talk in water's praise,  
And waste a deal of breath,  
But John, tho' he drank nothing else,  
He drank himself to death!

The cruel maid that caused his love  
Found out the fatal close,  
For looking in the butt, she saw  
The butt-end of his woes.

*JOHN DAY*

Some say his spirit haunts the Crown,  
But that is only talk—  
For after riding all his life,  
His ghost objects to walk!

## Stanzas

Farewell, Life! My senses swim;  
And the world is growing dim;  
Thronging shadows cloud the light,  
Like the advent of the night,—  
Colder, colder, colder still  
Upward steals a vapour chill—  
Strong the earthy odour grows—  
I smell the Mould above the Rose!

Welcome, Life! the Spirit strives!  
Strength returns, and hope revives;  
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn  
Fly like shadows at the morn,—  
O'er the earth there comes a bloom—  
Sunny light for sullen gloom,  
Warm perfume for vapour cold—  
I smell the Rose above the Mould!

## NOTES

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With the exception of an ode *To a False Friend*, the first sixteen poems were published originally in the *London Magazine* between July, 1821, and June, 1823.

"When *The Serenade*, commencing—

'Ah, Sweet, thou little knowest how  
I wake and passionate watches keep',

was first published," says Canon Ainger, "is unknown."

*The Dream of Eugene Aram* first appeared in *The Gem*, 1829. It was one of Hood's most powerful and exceptionally dramatic pieces. As a recitation it achieved, in later years, an immense popularity, one consequence of which was its frequent burlesque by those *sapeurs* of light literature, to whom "*rien n'est sacré*".

*The Death-bed*. In the *Englishman's Magazine* for August, 1831. Canon Ainger says that "Hood's son was under the impression that they were written on the death of one of his father's sisters, but supplied no evidence bearing on the question".

Hood's "*Song of the Shirt*" appeared in the Christmas number of the fifth volume of *Punch*. This volume, says Mark Lemon, writing editorially, in the preface, was "Mr. Punch's third Christmas gift". This "Christmas Number", in my ancient edition, appears in the *middle* of the volume. It is immediately followed by the Almanack [or Christmas Number?] for "*Volume VIIth, 1834, published at the office, 194 Strand*". So that from this evidence it appears that Hood's poem finished the second half-yearly volume of



## NOTES

*Punch* [*i.e.* its fifth volume], but has somehow been shifted into a wrong place. At all events Thomas Hood's poem is to be found at p. 260 of "Punch's Triumphal Procession". Whether this "Triumphal Procession" was an extra number or not is difficult to determine, as this general title stands at the head of five consecutive pages only, *i.e.* from 259 to 263, and on 264 the usual title, *Punch, or The London Charivari*, reappears. Canon Ainger says that there is another of Thomas Hood's poems in this same number of *Punch*, entitled "The Pauper's Christmas Carol", and adds that the striking effect of this latter poem was entirely obscured by the brilliancy of "The Song of the Shirt". But, according to the evidence afforded by this very volume of *Punch*, now before me, the two poems seem to me to have appeared in two separate numbers. "The Song of the Shirt" is in the "Christmas Number" [see p. 260, fifth volume of *Punch*], and "The Pauper's Christmas Carol" is to be found at page 269 of the following number, which consisted of only four pages of "ordinary matter", as the remaining pages are devoted to the "Index" for the year and to the preface to the volume.

"*Faithless Sally Brown*." This was published anonymously in the *London Magazine*. When Hood reprinted this ballad in *Whims and Oddities* he prefaced it with the following words, which I record here out of a long quotation made by Canon Ainger. "I have never been vainer of any verses," wrote Hood, "than of my part in the following Ballad. . . . The lamented Emery, dressed as Tom Tug, sang it at his last mortal benefit at Covent Garden." Thence Thomas Hood traces its career as a favourite with Thames wherry-men, watermen at Vauxhall, with the life-guards, and so on. He finishes thus:—"The profits of *Sally Brown* were divided by the ballad-mongers; it has cost, but has never brought me, a halfpenny".

*The Lost Heir*. A great hit was made with this ditty as a sort of chanted song—chantered, that is, in much the same manner as Thackeray, who was not a vocalist, used to recite in monotone his *Three Sailors of Bristol City*,—given in some farce, or perhaps in more than one, by

## NOTES

"Little Robson" at the Olympic Theatre, somewhere about 1854. The fresh popularity given to *The Lost Hair* by Robson, caused it to become, immediately, a great favourite with the comic singers of that period at Evans's, Cider Cellars, and so forth, whose entertainments used to commence considerably later than the hours at which the theatres were opened, and were continued up to the small hour of two in the morning. Many among the audience of the Olympic would hear Robson sing this song at the theatre, and would come on to listen to it again as an accompaniment to their supper at one of the above-mentioned houses of entertainment.